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## THE PLACE OF RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT IN SAINT THOMAS

PROBLEMS WHICH A MODERN CONCEPTION OF RELIGIOUS  
SENTIMENT PRESENTS TO THE THEOLOGIAN

IN 1917 Mr. Rudolph Otto, Protestant theological professor at the University of Marburg, published a work entitled *Das Heilige (The Idea of the Holy)* ? In 1929 Mr. Andre Jundt presented a French translation of this work under the title *Le Sacré*.<sup>1</sup> This translation was made from the eighteenth German edition, then the most recent. By 1923 the work had been translated into English; in 1924 a Swedish translation appeared; in 1925 a Spanish one, and finally Italian and Japanese translations. As is indicated by this exceptional success for a book of this kind, the work fitted in with the needs of the times. The subject of religion was presenting a number of problems. Mr. Otto had a new solution to offer which seemed to be very satisfactory.

What precisely were these problems? In non-Catholic centers, recent researches into the history of religions and into religious psychology had brought about differences of opinion with regard to the origin and nature of religion. Mr. Otto presented a study on the very object of religion. In his opinion the surest way to settle the difficulties was to stake out clearly

<sup>1</sup> Rudolph Otto, *Das Heilige Ueber das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalem*, Gotha (Klotz): 1907. From the second edition (1923) on, the work was doubled; the supplements annexed to the preceding editions have formed an independent volume under the title, *Aufsätze, Das Numinose betreffend*, Gotha (Klotz): 1923. The references in this manuscript are to the translation made by John W. Harvey, professor of philosophy at Armstrong College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, entitled *The Idea of the Holy An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, revised edition, pp. 239 + xx. Oxford University Press, London: 1986.

<sup>3</sup> *Le Sacré \* L'élément non-rationnel dans l'idée du divin et sa relation avec le rationnel*, Payot, Paris: 1929.

the proper domain of religion? Then it would be easy, he thought, to determine the origin and nature of religion. The procedure was wise in so far as it was in conformity with the old Aristotelian principle of specifying the activities of the soul by their objects? Let us see in detail how Mr. Otto employed this principle. To follow his argumentation, we should become more aware of the actual proportions of the problems concerning religion.

Mr. Otto begins by avowing that the human mind realizes it must renounce its habitual procedures when trying to define clearly the object of religion? The religious man faces something mysterious, a reality which refuses to be placed in our ordinary categories. The intellect is incapable of defining the most fundamental and original data; it can only examine them? In this view, the object of religion is an irrational, unlike something which is unknown only scientifically (something which will be identified eventually). Nor is it like a secret reserved to the initiated. It is an ineffable entity. The whole concern of religion is to safeguard the integrity of this ineffable entity. The domain of religion begins at the point where it coincides with mystery.<sup>7</sup>

How can one reach this mystery? By the feelings which this reality stimulates in us? But on this matter we must try to

a "... if there be any single domain of human experience that presents Us with something unmistakably specific and unique, peculiar to itself, assuredly it is that of the religious life" (Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, p. 4).

1 *Summa Theologiae*, III. q. 19. a. 1, ad Sum.

• "The reader is invited to direct his mind to a moment of deeply-felt religious experience, as little as possible qualified by other forms of consciousness. Whoever cannot do this, whoever knows no such moments in his experience, is requested to read no further; for it is not easy to discuss questions of religious psychology with one who ... cannot recall any intrinsically religious feelings" (Otto, *op. cit.* p. 8).

• "This mental state is perfectly *trii generis* and irreducible to any other; and therefore, like every absolutely primary and elementary datum, while it admits of being discussed, it cannot be strictly defined" (*Ibid.*, p. 7).

• "[The] non-rational or supra-rational Subject [the object of religion] eludes the conceptual way of understanding" (*Ibid.*, p. 2).

§ On page 8 of his work. Dr. Otto begins his analysis of "The Elements in the 'Numinous'" by denying the value of intellectual analysis of this object. That is why he limits his readers to those who can attain the "Numinous" by the only way possible, namely, religious *feelings*.

understand Mr. Olio, not reach our own conclusions. For him, *feeling* is the summit of *knowledge*. *Feeling brings us* into contact with superior realities. Like touch with regard to material things, *feeling tells us that* eternal realities are at hand and *gives us an* immediate and certain, although obscure, *knowledge of them*. *On the other hand*, the attainments of *feeling* cannot be conceived, for as notions of value they embrace irrational elements as soon as they appear in the field of *knowledge*. Thus the only way to understand the object lies in analyzing how consciousness reacts when faced with this object, especially at the moments of most intense emotion." We can see from this that it is necessary to distinguish two stages in knowing the object of religion. We enter into contact with it by intuition, and its *existence* will be corroborated by the feelings which arise in us. But to isolate its profound *nature*, it is necessary to have recourse to introspection. This will reveal its nature to us through the tonality of sentiments which this mysterious reality causes us to experience.<sup>10</sup> Let us now see how Mr. Otto conforms to this twofold procedure when he details his researches.

First he establishes the word which most properly characterizes this experience. The word "sacred" seems suitable. But we must restore the primitive meaning of this word, that is, the meaning it had when it was strictly applied to the domain of religion. Today "sacred" signifies that which is "the absolute moral attribute, denoting the consummation of moral goodness." According to Mr. Otto, this is an evolved and degraded meaning.<sup>11</sup> By taking on this ethical sense, the word "sacred" was rationalized and deprived of a part of its original content. The final result of this gradual schematization is the fact that the word no longer corresponds to an

\* Cf. note 8.

<sup>10</sup> " . . . the nature of the numinous can only be suggested by means of the special way in which it is reflected in the mind in terms of feeling. 'Its nature is such that it grips or stirs the human mind with this and that determinate affective state'" (*Op. cit.*, p. 12; cf. also pp. 8 and 9).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

original and clearly specific feeling. Moreover, Mr. Otto designates the object of his reactions during the incidents of religious emotion by the word "numinous." This word, unlike the term "sacred" has preserved a strictly religious signification—something like the word *M Qâdô-h* in Semitic religions.

Even this word does not satisfy Mr. Otto. For him it is merely the least improper for designating his experiences. He notes, however, that this very inability to find an adequate expression for characterizing religious sentiment shows how much complexity and irreducibility there is in this sentiment. Moreover, from this time on he sees the numinous as an entirely separate category. That is why he immediately considers what religious feeling has in common with the states of purely moral exaltation, and what additional solemnity and violent impression it alone implies.

He begins his consideration by interrogating his religious consciousness. What first comes to the surface for analysis is the idea that religious feeling is related to a feeling of dependence.<sup>14</sup> However, religious feeling is accompanied by such a violent emotion that one must be on guard lest he should confuse it with related feelings of humility. It is a "creature-consciousness." The decisive, specific element is prostration, effacement not only before a sovereign power as such, but before an "overpowering might." i.e. There is a difference not only of degree, but also of quality.<sup>15</sup>

However, to note Mr. Otto, this "creature-feeling" teaches us nothing directly bearing upon the object. It is rather a reaction of the subject, something concomitant or consequent

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> On page 9, Dr. Otto refutes Schleiermacher's denial of the relationship between religious feeling and a feeling of dependence.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10 and 13.

It is [Schleiermacher's] mistake in making the distinction between that which is 'absolute' and 'relative' dependence, and therefore a difference of degree and not of intrinsic quality" (*Ibid.*, p. 9).

upon the impression caused by the object?" The violent impression which is experienced precedes, in us, the production of our being which results from this impression, from the object causes in us a feeling of terror? One succeeds in penetrating little by little the nature of the object which arouses the original emotion (the "numinous") only by studying the tonality of the original emotion. Again, Mr. Otto warns us that it is necessary to renounce the hope of arriving at a definition of this object. From the feeling of terror which this object arouses in us, Mr. Otto deduces that it is a mystery which makes one shudder! From that point, always by a more profound analysis of religious feelings, he tries to place a limit on whatever each of the diverse elements derived in the "numinous" implies to be ineffable.

What is the quality of the terror aroused by the numinous object? To describe it, Mr. Otto has recourse to the Biblical expression "emât Jahweh," the fear of God. We must consider it as a dread or an intense horror, having a paralyzing effect? Nothing created can inspire such fright. Mr. Otto qualifies this state with the words "feeling of something uncanny."<sup>23</sup> However, here again it is not a matter of the highest degree of fear, anguish, or dread, but rather a feeling of an entirely different quality. It is a feeling which is purified in the case of the saint, and is transformed into a very noble emotion rendering the soul silent and making it tremble in its very depths.

Finally let us note that what provokes this "mystical fright" is the "absolute unapproachability" of the numinous object. What arouses the subjective reaction, the "creature consciousness," is the perception of the "absolute superiority . . . [in] power" of the object?

Having finished this analysis, Mr. Otto tries to consider the other element of the numinous, the element of mystery ("inys-

wZd., p. 10.

" Ibid., p. 10.

" Ibid., p. 12.

« Ibid., p. 13.

" Ibid., p. 14.

" Ibid., p. 15.

\* Ibid., p. 22.

terium M). The element of the awful trnryrdwi \*  
 parrel with the element of mystery, i» arv^wory Mid <-  
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 again we must guard agamtt making a mistake. **We must be**  
 careful to use only the exprradon which **most property char-**  
 acterize the quality of the sentiments which we experie-». .  
 The astonishment which is experienced when one comet **into**  
 contact with the numinous has the property of being a sort  
 of stupor. It caute» a aurprùe which paralyze» us. We remain  
 absolutely dumbfounded/ The explanation for this lies in  
 the fact that the thing to be wondered at ("Mürum ün  
 pressing us as it does at this point, recovers the primitive and  
 exclusively religious meaning which it possessed at first. The  
 numinous is not only something secret. something not under-  
 stood, something unexplained; it is in its full sense \* the  
 "wholly other/ " a reality which by its very nature is abso-  
 lutely incommensurable. Before this " wholly other \* I **fal**  
 back, seized with stupor.

The original feeling experienced in our contacts with the  
 numinous object is one of unspeakable horror, and it is feH  
 while we remain wholly dumbfounded. To account for this  
 cxjicriencr. it is vain to have recourse to sentiments of love,  
 friendliness, and other analogous representations of reason  
 The mystery seduces us, draws us. fascinates us We ice

M ZbJ.pp.t54.

\*' Ibid., p. re

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 upon a man with parah nng effort ~ (p. 14).

. the natural man i» quite unable eve® to duaàrr cr fcci Ke-er W  
 the real wncs of the word \* (p 13). " . the rcsembal **chiact-xu**  
 feeling) . . . lies . . . in . . . the Hwpor before «worthing other'  
 (p. «7).

" Ibid.p.48.



ourselves drawn towards this object with all the weight of our being, which remains seized with fright. The numinous appears *suddenly as* a fascinating mystery (“mysterium fascinans”). It is an inexpressible feeling. Even the greatest mystics have confessed that they were unable to push the analysis further.<sup>31</sup>

Mr. Otto ends his introspective researches at this point. From now on he will conduct another search—a search in which he will try to find justifications for his statements on the numinous in the history of religions. This second part of his work has very little interest for us. It is more important to follow out the detail of Mr. Otto's analyses and to form a synthesis of the data collected up to this point. In this way we shall better see the problems which this conception of religious sentiment places before Catholic theology.

First let us note the order of generation in religions sentiment, how it originates and develops in us. According to Mr. Otto, the numinous object arouses in us first a feeling of fright. The fright becomes stupor inasmuch as we perceive how much this reality is beyond our grasp or conception. This realization occurs at the moment when we become conscious of the fact that we are ourselves moving towards the “wholly other.” Because we remain paralyzed, dumbfounded from astonishment, we gradually feel an irresistible attraction for the numinous. This object has appeared in signal splendor in spite of its absolute “superiority . . . [in] power.” The numinous is thereby successively revealed, first as something awful (“tremendum”), then as an awful mystery (“mysterium tremendum”), and finally as an awful and fascinating mystery (“mysterium tremendum et fascinans”). As noted before,

<sup>31</sup> “The greatest mystics” to whom Dr. Otto makes reference are mystics of various creeds. The author cites the statements of various mystics, but names only a few of them. For example, he quotes St. Catherine of Genoa: “O that I could tell you what the heart feels, how it burns and is consumed inwardly! Only, I find no words to express it. I can but say: Might but one little drop of what I feel fall into Hell, Hell would be transformed into a Paradise” (Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 38). On page 39 of the same work, the author quotes a Buddhist mystic who says about Nirvana, “Bliss—unspeakable.”

Mr. Otto finds an order among the "diverting" The numinous object would be a mystery containing "one repulsive, the other attractive. Religion is the fulfilment of our contacts with this reality. Evidently this fulfilment would be a complex of elements:

The Qualitative Content of the Numinous	Form the mystery ("mysterium") the "Way other" Repulsive: "awful majesty" "majestas tremenda" Attractive "fascination" ("fascinatio")
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The Religion Feeling which It Arouses	Fundamentally: a feeling of stupor of originating in a feeling of fight developing into a feeling of fascination
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That remains a schema. The synthesis of Mr. Otto's conception which this schema presents should be interpreted with all the nuances which we have tried to bring out in analyzing his work.

Can this conception satisfy a Catholic theologian? By proposing the problem of the origin and nature of religion, this book brings our relations with God into question.

Is it right to reduce religion to a matter of feeling, as Mr. Otto does? If not, what place does feeling occupy in religion? On the other hand, to what extent is it true that our relations with God begin in fright, remain in stupor, and finally expand in love? This would mean that God successively reveals Himself to the soul under a threefold aspect: first as absolutely sovereign in power, then as absolutely unapproachable, and finally as having a unique splendor and fascination.

These are the problems which we shall try to resolve by ascertaining the true place of religious feeling in St. Thomas' theology. We do not have to pursue our studies from any other source, since we are confident that we shall find the most faithful interpretation and formulation of the thought of the Church in St. Thomas' synthesis.

SOLUTION TO THESE PROBLEMS AS OFFERED BY ST. THOMAS IN  
HIS THEOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS

St. Thomas touches upon the problem of our relations with *God* in several places throughout his works. He has even a special and complete treatise on Religion in his *Summa Theologiae*. In the very first article of this treatise,<sup>82</sup> he says that it is proper to the virtue of religion to regulate our relations with *God*, for "it consists only in the order to God." One who reads St. Thomas' considerations on the subject of religion after having analyzed the study of Mr. Rudolph Otto is truly surprised to find a similarity in terminology between these two authors. This terminological similarity is so striking that at first sight one would be tempted to establish relations between the two doctrines and conclude that they are perfectly in conformity. But we must consider the matter more closely. We shall begin by a critical analysis of St. Thomas' vocabulary as compared with that of Mr. Otto. In this way we shall be able to note how far the conceptions of St. Thomas and Mr. Otto agree, and how far they differ. In proceeding thus, we shall follow the method dear to St. Thomas, for he always penetrates the nature of things by a preliminary and attentive study of the words—to pass, as he says, from the nominal definition (the "quid nominis") to the real (the "quid rei")

*Similarities in terminology*

The work that we are undertaking embraces two stages. First, we shall review the vocabulary which St. Thomas uses in his considerations on religion. Then we shall try to reconstruct the theological context in which St. Thomas' expressions should receive their authentic interpretation.

Since St. Thomas' religious vocabulary is large and varied, it would require too much time to make a complete and detailed review of it. We shall limit our consideration to the terminology that he uses when touching upon the specific problems of the

<sup>82</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 81, a. 1, c.      " *Ibid.*, I, q. 13, a. 1, c.

nature and origin of our relation with God. Vie àhafl prxwi l>y placing beside each of the words user! by Mr. Otto \*\*λ equivalent words in St. Thomas. The references are to tr.o<sup>le</sup> works of St. Thomas in which these problems are treated such. First among these are the *Summa Theol/sgiae* and the *Commentary on Peter Lombard « Book of Sentences*.

The expression used most frequently by Mr. Otto is that of "religious feeling." With regard to this term, St. Thomas speaks of "reverence" and "reverential affection."<sup>M</sup> Mr. Otto says that religious feeling is fundamentally a "feeling of stupor." St. Thomas, too, seems to identify reverence with a fear, for he speaks of "reverential fear" <sup>M</sup> or "filial fear," <sup>M</sup> which he distinguishes from "senile fear," "the fear of punishment."

Mr. Otto resolves this feeling of stupor into two elements: the feeling originates in fright, then develops into fascination. In regard to reverential fear (filial fear), St. Thomas speaks of a twofold movement: on the one hand "the flight of adequation," on the other, "the flight of separation."<sup>\*7</sup> This is a complex affective state combining love and submission in relation to a Being upon Whom one realizes he must depend for all things. St. Thomas often calls this state "love of excellence" or, more frequently, "the friendship of superabundance." <sup>ae</sup>

According to Mr. Otto, the fright with which God inspires us causes in us a profound feeling of dependence which he calls "creature-consciousness"—a sort of unique dejection which we experience only before an "overpowering might." St. Thomas uses analogous expressions, seemingly for the same purpose. In his judgment, our fear of God is that which even-creature experiences when he realizes God's majesty and becomes conscious of the infinite distance which separates him from God. St. Thomas adds that at these moments we have

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 7. a. 6, c.

<sup>88</sup> *Q. D. de Spe*, q. 1. a. 4. ad Sum.

<sup>88</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 9, c.

<sup>87</sup> Çt D. de q. tS. a. 4. »d 4«a

<sup>88</sup> *In VUI Ethic.* 7. >, IFiS

no other desire than to efface ourselves in our smallness—"sinking into our own poorness" or "recoiling into our own smallness."<sup>39</sup>

The reason why the sacred inspires us with such feelings lies in the fact that in our contacts with God He reveals Himself as a mystery, something "wholly other." He presents Himself under the irreducible aspects, first of an "awful majesty," then as "fascinating." This is Mr. Otto's teaching.<sup>40</sup> St. Thomas states the same in equivalent terms. According to him, our feelings of reverence increase as we know God more. Our reverential fear, far from diminishing, increases according to the proportion of our knowing and loving God. It is when knowledge and love increase that God seems to us to be less accessible, to be ineffable, incomprehensible, and of such excellence and majesty that He transcends every possible comparison.<sup>41</sup>

As yet we are not concerned about furnishing the definitive interpretation of St. Thomas' vocabulary on the question concerning religion; we want only to reconstruct the context in which it should be interpreted, to discover the place religion occupies in St. Thomas' theology.

To perceive this clearly, we must first ask what conception St. Thomas had of theology. For him theology was "a ccr-

<sup>39</sup> *Ç. D. de Spe*, q. 1, a. 4, ad 2um.

<sup>40</sup> "The qualitative *content* of the numinous experience, to which 'the mysterious' stands as *form*, is in one of its aspects the element of daunting 'awefulness' and 'majesty,' which has already been dealt with in detail; but it is clear that it has at the same time another aspect, in which it shows itself as something uniquely attractive and *fascinating*. . . . The daemonic-divine object may appear to the mind an object of horror and dread, but at the same time it is no less something that allures with a potent charm, and the creature, who trembles before it, utterly cowed and cast down, has always at the same time the impulse to turn to it, nay even to make it somehow his own. . . . It may well be possible, it is even probable, that in the first stage of its development the religious consciousness started with only one of its poles—the 'daunting' aspect of the numen. . . . But the process does not end [even with the attempt 'to appropriate the prodigious force of the numen for the natural ends of man']. Possession of and by the numen becomes an end in itself; it begins to be sought for its own sake. . ." (Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 31).

<sup>41</sup> *in Sent.*, d. XXXIV, q. 2, quæst. 4, sol. 4a.

tain impression of divine knowledge in um/' a of ar? kapatM participation in God' own knowtata i- ■ / as a science is an attempt to organize revealed data a/ry/rc Lg to the demands of the Aristotelian concept of «/aenee, The need for such a science is founded in our very human nature, in so far as our intellects must cogitate on the obteure certitudes which faith presents.<sup>45</sup> Since theology is tarn from faith and develops under the light of faith, this science should result in a more intense, more vital, and more loving faith in God. One can conceive it as an attempt to penetrate the data of faith—an attempt which is always begun, but never completed. The purpose of this attempt is to obtain a fuller understanding of the truths of faith. It is incumbent upon theology to bring out the demands of our faith, to show the new attitudes which man must have in his relations with God. Theology must make clear what relations we should have with God in the light of what He reveals to us, both with regard to Himself and with regard to us.

From this consideration we can understand what place St Thomas assigns to religion in his theology. After showing what God has taught us about Himself, His intimate Life, and His free initiatives in regard to us this consideration shows how we emanate from God. St. Thomas starts immediately to show very carefully how God invites us to return to Him. In this section of his theology, the Angelic Doctor first determines the end of this road back to God. Then he marks the principal stages: each step we must take in order to progress towards knowing and loving Him better—until the Day when we shall see Him as He is and grasp Him in a definitive manner.

In this light, the twofold theme of procession from God through creation and of return to Him permits St. Thomas to organize all the data of our faith coherently and organically. It is quite surprising to see that St. Thomas discovers relations of causality and necessity among facts as contingent as our

<sup>45</sup> *Summa Theob.* I, q. 1. a. 3. at 4um.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 4, a. 1, c.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 10, c.

creation, fall, and redemption. These are purely free actions on both God's part and ours. How can they be matter for science, which has to do only with what is necessary? That could lead us astray. Let us indicate that St. Thomas is guided by one principle in his penetration of revealed truths: the supernatural is placed in a subject (namely, man) whose nature it is to perfect, not destroy. Thus St. Thomas always sees a continuity between the work of nature and the work of grace. Grace surpasses nature by extending it. Grace is thereby a gift and a requisite. It answers a need of human nature. In the light of this principle St. Thomas enlarges a full theological context by undertaking an attentive study of our nature, its mechanisms, its fundamental tendencies, and its most basic needs. He does this to show what grace contributes. In noting the necessities and desires of our nature, St. Thomas perceives the unspeakable order implied by the different facts of our redemption. Redemption is continuous with creation. Both manifest God's infinite mercy.

Let us make a closer examination of St. Thomas' procedure in treating of our return to God. In this way we shall better understand the place which religion occupies in his theology. First he groups the revelations of our faith which have to do with two primary and therefore most important facts. Then he draws out the consequent attitudes of the soul which must be adopted if we are to enter the one and only path which leads back to God. The two primary facts are the following: first, that we are born as sinners, that is, in revolt against God. This is the state of a will frustrated in its attempt to pursue its end by itself—a desperate state in which man is totally unable to ordain himself to God again. The second fact is that God, moved by an infinite pity towards our miserable condition decided to pardon us by an unheard-of act of mercy. God has called us to share in His own Life. Since our offense is infinite, our redemption can be accomplished only by God Himself. His Son took this mission upon Himself, and thanks to Him, we have been called to share divine Life even here on earth. Christ led a supernaturalized human life which serves



as a model teaching us how we are to pursue our new goal. These facts imply many consequences which bear directly upon our lives. This is why St. Thomas details everything which our faith says is necessary for attaining the possession of God and for enjoying eternal friendship with Him.

To attain such an end each of our acts must be supernatural. We must live here on earth as God's sons, God's friend. Our intellects must think only in God's light; our wills must love according to God's measure, God's motives and order. To reach eternal union with God, our intellects, our wills, and all the other principles of our activity must be supernaturalized (since by their very natures they are indeterminate); that is, they must be oriented to and fixed in a stable preference for the supernatural good. St. Thomas concludes from this that they must all be perfected by supernatural virtues, since "virtue makes good both the operation (that is, in conformity with the demands of our end), and the operator."

Moreover, in order to fix us in God, the supernatural virtues reestablish order in us. The work of grace is to heal and then to raise to the supernatural order. This first work of grace is proper to the two moral virtues of temperance and fortitude operating under the direct influence of charity, thus establishing interior peace and uniting our being firmly to God. However, in order to live an integrally supernatural life, we must also have supernatural relations with our neighbors. The supernatural virtue of justice, also moving under the influence of charity, stabilizes us in relation to our neighbors, makes us respect their rights, and moves us to pay our debts to them. The term "our neighbors" applies not only to equals, but also to inferiors and superiors. Among the last mentioned, God has the pre-eminent place. The virtue of religion regulates our relations to Him. From this we see that St. Thomas classifies a complete section of our attitudes under the name of religion—attitudes which are prescribed by our faith as absolutely necessary if we desire to reach Him and to succeed in possessing Him.

Up to this point nothing very precise has been established,



but we have at hand a general context for sake of reference. We shall need this general context when we compare the conceptions of St. Thomas with those of Mr. Otto. Already we can see that, beneath seemingly similar and closely related words, greatly varying approaches to our relations with God are hidden.

### *Differences in conception*

The origin and nature of our relations with God depend upon the way in which we conceive God. The history of religions demonstrates the truth of this statement. We can easily establish the fact that religion has progressed in purity and spirituality as man has arrived at more exact notions of God. On the other hand, religion has been degraded even into superstition when dominated by gross conceptions about God.<sup>45</sup> Too, this is the history of every individual man. If one conceives God falsely, with prejudice, his relations with God soon deviate and degenerate fatally into superstitions of all sorts.<sup>46</sup> However, if a man consents to the correction of his natural notions of God by faith, his religion is expanded and spiritualized proportionately.

Up to this point, we have established similarities and have marked apparent relationships between Mr. Otto's conception of religion and that of St. Thomas. However, we have not gone beyond the realm of psychological description, in which we have noted a number of similarities in the vocabularies used by each author. Now we must penetrate their doctrines and try to find: first, how each doctrine conceives God; then, at what concept of religion each doctrine arrives, in the light of the preceding concept of God.

### *Diverse conceptions of the divine*

It would be more exact to speak of diverse conceptions with regard to our capacity to know God. Mr. Otto departs from

<sup>46</sup> A. Lemonnyer, *La Revelation primitive et les données actuelles de la science* (Paris: 1914), pp. 21-67.

*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 85, a. 1, c.

St. Thomas less on the *manner* of conceiving God than on the very *possibility* of conceiving Him. We shall consider first Mr. Otto's teaching.

The possibility of knowing God here on earth is not considered as such in the book, *The Idea of the Holy*. Mr. Otto considers that his solution to this problem is presupposed in the psychological description which he elaborates in regard to the origin and nature of religious sentiment. Too, if he suggests this solution, he does so only occasionally, and never with all the explanations one would desire. We have mentioned his principal statements in this regard. His work leaves no doubt about the positions he has adopted in this problem; but again we have one regret—namely, that he has taken so little care to justify these positions in the eyes of the reader. For our part, let us try to find the obvious meaning of the aforementioned texts. We shall immediately see what consequences they imply.

We know already that for Mr. Otto religion consists in "an experience of mystery."<sup>47</sup> However, for him the "mysterious ... is that which lies altogether outside what can be thought, and is alike in form, quality, and essence, the utterly and wholly other."<sup>48</sup> The existence of this inaccessible, unspeakable reality, which he makes an "irrational," is known only by the feelings which mystery inspires. It is a mysten- which simultaneously fills us with stupor and fascinates us. The ideas we pretend to have about God and His attributes are only conceptual representations of what we feel. They are mere schematizations of subjective states.<sup>49</sup> "They are not intellectual concepts properly so called, but something which resembles concepts, *ideograms*, *pure signs* which indicate a particular element of religious experience."<sup>50</sup> They are not intended to express the divine.<sup>51</sup> The great error (according to Mr. Otto) has been to believe that they "used to exhaust the essence of deity,"<sup>52</sup> to "transfer" these "natural attri-

<sup>47</sup> R. Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>81</sup> Z6\*1. p. 2.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 145-6.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

*M Ibid.*

butes, which *ought only to be used as 'ideograms' for what is itself properly beyond utterance, to the non-rational as real qualifications of it," and to*

*mistake symbolic expressions of feelings for adequate concepts upon which a "scientific" structure of knowledge may be based.<sup>53</sup> ... we have to predicate them of a subject which they qualify, but which in its deeper essence is not, nor indeed can be, comprehended in them.<sup>TM</sup> All this [that is, the manifestation of the effects of religious feeling] teaches us the independence of the positive content of this experience from the implications of its overt conceptual expression, and how it can be firmly grasped, thoroughly understood, and profoundly appreciated, purely in, with, and from the feeling itself.<sup>55</sup>*

*In spite of that, Mr. Otto pretends to preserve a certain value for our notions about God. Without being necessary for religion, these conceptualizations can be useful, on the condition that they preserve only a purely representative value.*

*By being steeped in and saturated with rational elements [a religion] ... is guarded from sinking into fanaticism or mere mysticality, or at least from persisting in these. ...<sup>50</sup>*

If Mr. Otto's conceptions were more precise, they would remind us of what St. Thomas has to say about the experience of the mystics. The Angelic Doctor admits that by the exercise of the gift of wisdom, the saints arrive at a certain experience of God. Their charity makes them so conformed to God that they come to the point of judging about God and His Revelation by connaturality. The gift of wisdom permits them to taste, to savor God, to have an affective knowledge about Him. According to St. Thomas, faith tends to loving vision of God in order to dissipate the obscurities in which faith lives. In this very precise case, St. Thomas admits that the potencies of loving penetrate further into the mystery of God than the potencies of knowing.

Mr. Otto carelessly neglects to distinguish between the case of the mystics and the case of souls whose interior life is not as

*Balbid.*, p. 24.

*Bi Ibid.*, p. 2.

*55 Ibid.*, p. 34.

*50 Ibid.*, p. 146.

yet sufficiently under the domination of the Holy Spirit, Erroneous conclusions can be drawn from Mr. Ott/Aments as they are formulated. Their principal error is that the reader is led to the conviction that God is not an object of knowledge, but only of feeling. To speak of God is too precise; it is to yield to a concept. For Mr. Otto, the category of the "sacred" is anterior to everything else. The "wholly other" is an unspeakable object which can come to us only by impressing us. When this impression occurs, an absolutely original relation between our being and the transcendent mystery is established. The idea of God translates this relation into symbols.

These symbols, Mr. Otto insists, have no objective value. Their value is only extrinsic and arbitrary, providing a subjective resonance for the person who uses them—a resonance which varies for each one according to his own experience of the sacred. We can see, then, that they remain mere conceptual representations of an affective state, a formulation in language which is more or less exact—language which is full of equivocations. This language refers each state to sentiments of varying tonalities, results of an introspection of our own religious experiences.

This theory not only contains misleading expressions; it is equivalent to an open confession that we are totally incapable of knowing God, of attaining Him as He is. One who holds this theory is no longer sure that God exists. It is impossible to know Him; God escapes our knowledge. It is true that I can feel Him; but tomorrow if my emotions are dry, the sacred will leave me indifferent and in complete doubt about its very existence. The less fortunate may never feel it. What value can they give to my testimony? In vain shall I insist with the utmost conviction that I feel that the sacred exists. That insistence cannot force these less fortunate to adhere to my statement or furnish them means of verifying my assertions.

Fundamentally such a symbolism is only a *symbolism*. Sacred Scripture uses symbols and metaphors, but the

purpose and the meaning of symbols and metaphors in Sacred Scripture are quite different from those of Mr. Otto. In each case, the context guards us against stopping at the image; it moves us to go beyond the symbol or metaphor and to penetrate the truth the Scripture suggests. According to St. Thomas' explanation,<sup>67</sup> the *sacred* authors have recourse to symbolism only to help us to rise to the knowledge of divine things; these authors always take care to use familiar and current images and to make clear that their use is symbolical. As we shall see further on, the procedure in this case has no end other than to give the analogical knowledge which we can have of God in the most comprehensible terms. On the other hand, to reduce our knowledge about God to simple "ideograms," which have only a subjective and arbitrary value, as Mr. Otto does, is to say that our means of expressing God are false, in every sense. Or it is to say that they signify nothing objective, and therefore furnish no teaching on God which would have any value. It seems that Mr. Otto urges us to express God on a basis of experience in order to console us in our very inability to *know* God. If we follow Mr. Otto's method, we shall remain no less ignorant about God, for our symbols do not grasp God in any way.

From this we can see how Mr. Otto's "religion" deviates. Since this "religion" is no longer proportionate to our knowledge about God, but rather originates and evolves according to the rhythm of our feelings, it can soon degenerate into a mere sentimentalism, or remain as religious impressionism. That would not surprise us, for what other natural result can come from a conception of religion which holds that "every dogma which tries to resolve religious mysteries into concepts not only works in vain; it is moreover brutal and barbarous"?<sup>68</sup>

To disengage the characteristic notes of St. Thomas' analogism, let us consider first the error of the agnostics. Ordinarily, an agnostic reasons in this way: on the one hand, God

<sup>67</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 9, ad 2um.

<sup>68</sup> R. Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

is above all genera and species, He transcends every mode (A being. Moreover, we know nothing except what is, and define only through genera and species. Therefore, we can conclude to nothing except that God is wholly inaccessible.

This argument is not entirely false. It was elaborated as a reaction against the error of *anthropomorphism* and its false pretensions. Chief among these pretensions is that there are only differences of degree between creatures and God; in this way anthropomorphism pretends to define God. As opposed to this error, Mr. Otto, along with all the other agnostics, is certainly right when he protests against what he calls "the rationalization of the Unspeakable." It is certainly true that the notions which we use to express God *do not define Him*. The error of the agnostic lies in going too far and in refusing to admit a statement which has something absolutely *positive*, although not defined: namely, God is the Source. St. Thomas argues from this statement: if God is the Source, will He not possess what the streams contain, under some form (*according to some analogy*)? This is a happy solution in that it respects both the demands of God and the demands of our minds.

Agnosticism is a resignation to absolute ignorance about God; anthropomorphism claims that it knows *everything* about God. St. Thomas gives us humbler and truer words. He declares that we can know God; he confesses, on the other hand, that we cannot express Him as He is.<sup>59</sup>

Evidently the question concerns our capacity for knowing God while we are here on earth. To this capacity St. Thomas devotes the last two articles of the question in the *Summa* in which he treats of our way of knowing God.<sup>60</sup> These articles furnish all the clarifications necessary for understanding the following question, which has to do with the names that we must use if we are to speak correctly about God? What we have to say will be only a literal exposition of the principles which St. Thomas clarifies in these articles. In such a delicate

<sup>59</sup> *Cont. Gent.*, 28 and 29.

<sup>60</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 12, a. 12. c.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 15.

matter, we are interested in *holding to the very* letter of St. Thomas. We want to *discover* the smallest details in his thought—in the very texts where he exposes this thought.

St. Thomas asks, "How far can our reason go in its attempt to know *God here on earth?* " Thus the problem is well circumscribed in its data. It is the question of man's opportunities here on earth, and not of the conditions which will be given to him in heaven. This latter part was treated in the first eleven articles. Then, too, it is a matter of attaining God only by the resources of human reason. The following article deals with the possibilities offered by grace.<sup>02</sup> To the question about man's natural capacity to know God, St. Thomas gives the following answer: all our knowledge comes from the senses, which limit us in learning about God. Since sensible realities are effects, the being of which depends upon their cause, from their very existence we can conclude to the existence of God, their only true cause. However, since they are not adequate effects of God Who is infinite by nature and therefore incommunicable, sensible realities cannot manifest to us all of God's power; nor can they reveal the divine nature or essence. For this reason we are reduced to the state of not knowing what God is, and of attributing to Him only what His dignity as universal cause of all perfection demands.<sup>03</sup>

In this light we should attribute all the perfection which we discover on our natural plane of knowledge to God as to their cause. Realizing that things are good, we can conclude that God is good. But what precise meaning does the word "*good* " have when it is applied to God? What do the attribute of goodness and all the other attributes demanded in the capacity

"*Ibid.*, q. 12, a. 12, c.

w"Dicendum quod naturalis nostra cognitio a sensu principium sumit. . . . Ex sensibilibus autem non potest usque ad hoc intellectus noster pertingere quod divinam essentiam videat; quia creaturae sensibiles sunt effectus Dei virtutem causae non adaequantes. Unde ex sensibilibus cognitione non potest . . . Dei . . . essentia videri. Sed quia sunt eius effectus a causa dependentes, ex eis in hoc produci possumus . . . ut cognoscamus de ipso ea quae necesse est ei convenire secundum quod est prima omnium causa, excedens omnia sua causata" (*Ibid.*).



of the first cause, which is God, teach concerning God:—*nM ur-*,<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas gives an answer to this problem—an answer which completes what he told us about our natural capacity for concluding to God's existence by way of causality. For this answer, we refer to the second article of the following question.<sup>04</sup> St. Thomas concludes:

when, therefore, one says: God is good, the meaning is not: God is the cause of goodness; nor: God is not bad; but the meaning is: what we call goodness in creatures pre-exists in God in a superior way.

For in order that God may be the cause of goodness, it is necessary not only that He be not bad but also that goodness pre-exist in Him according to a superior mode. Therefore, when one says that God is good, it means that He is the universal good, not this or that particular good.” But what is goodness in God, and consequently, what is the divine nature which we understand when we say that God is good *in an eminent way*?

In the light of what has been said, we can attribute to God goodness and all the other perfections which we discover in the universe, for He is the only cause which can account for the existence of all these perfections. Moreover, in a certain way at least, every effect is similar to its cause. Therefore, before limiting our possibilities and inabilities to express God, we must know exactly in what sense God is the universal cause of all things, and, consequently, in what measure creatures are similar to Him.

We must be prudent in this matter. Anthropomorphism considers God as a *higher species* of the genus “being,” which genus includes both uncreated and created being. Moreover, pantheism considers God as a *genus* entering into the composition of every created being. In this latter case. God is reduced to the rank of *formal cause* in everything; He is the necessary component of every being. In the former case.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, q. 18, a. 2, c.

*es Ibid.*



*although God is not a particular cause, lie is a general cause]* but *He is of the same nature* as His creatures. St. Thomas is careful to avoid these errors. He warns us that God has no generic or specific *relation with* created being.<sup>10</sup> God is a *transcendent principle*, above every category, even that of being. For God possesses every perfection in its fullness; His *effects* have only a certain likeness with Him, “much as the natures of lower bodies represent the power of the sun.”<sup>07</sup>

*This conclusion leads* St. Thomas to distinguish three kinds of likeness. He states that since likeness is a participation in the same form, this participation can be realized *according to the same nature and the same mode*. An example of this is the participation between every particular univocal cause and its effect—a perfect likeness which is called specific resemblance. This participation can be realized, too, according to one same nature and *different modes*. This kind gives a generic resemblance, such as exists, for example, between a general cause and a particular effect. In this case there is only a difference of degree. This is the kind of resemblance the anthropomorphists attribute to God and His creatures, as though they belonged to the same genus of being. Finally, the participation in the same form can be realized *according to different natures*. In this case, there is only an *analogical resemblance*.<sup>TM</sup> This is the case of every creature in relation to God, for the creature resembles God only in so far as it is a being, and, therefore, in so far as it is like the first and universal principle of all being.<sup>09</sup>

Let us bring together all the data we have accumulated with regard to our possibilities for knowing God. Starting with sensible creatures, we can come to know that God *exists* and that in Him pre-exist all perfections which we find in these sensible creatures, but according to a higher mode. Up to this point St. Thomas has conceded only the power to know

<sup>07</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>09</sup> *Ibid.*

ce Cfr. *ibid.*, q. 4, a. 3, c.

<sup>TM</sup> “ilia quae sunt a Deo, assimilantur ei inquantum sunt entia, ut primo et universali principio totius esse” (*Ibid.*).

the *existence* of God and of all perfections in Him, The question of knowing what constitutes God's nature and the nature of His perfections has not come up as yet. However, this question is implicit in what has been said, and to reach it is it possible to arrive at the knowledge of the nature of a transcendent cause from the nature of equivocal effects? The answer to this will become clear if we inquire into the names that we can use in speaking of God and the measure in which we can be sure that these names express Him.

There are three kinds of names that we can use in speaking of God, but they must be used with diverse precautions. Since we attribute to God every perfection that can be attributed to a creature, *according to a higher mode*, every name which implies a perfection without including any modality can be applied *both to God and to creatures*. Such names will be *common* to God and creatures. Thus we attribute knowledge to God because the word "knowledge" is abstracted from every special mode of knowledge and thereby logically transcendent. On the contrary, every name which implies the imperfection of any created mode cannot be applied to God, except through metaphor. An example of this can be found in the expressions, "God sees," "God hears," "God becomes angry." Finally, every name which has the indication of the transcendent mode proper to God in its very meaning will play the role of a *proper name*. Such are the expressions "Sovereign Good," "First Being," and "Supreme Cause."

Does this last category of names, expressing perfections without defect, that is, whatever is proper to God, give us the knowledge of God's nature? St. Thomas answers with a distinction. It is true that they have to do with God's substance.

70 "Quia enim omnem perfectionem creaturae est in Deo invenire, sed per a modum eminentiorem, quaecumque nomina absolute perfectionem absque defectu designant, de Deo praedicantur et aliis rebus: sicut . . . sapientia. . . Quia vero nomina huiusmodi perfectiones designant cum modo proprio creaturis, tunc Deo dici non possunt, nisi per similitudinem et metaphoram . . . : sicut aliquis lapis dicitur lapis, propter duritiem intellectus. . . . Quae vero huiusmodi per se expriment cum supereminenti modo, quo Deo conveniunt, de solo Deo dicuntur; sicut summum bonum, primum ens, et alia huiusmodi" (I-II, 13, 20).

not only with His causality/ It is true, moreover, that they signify what is positive in Him.<sup>7</sup> However, this signification extends only to *the thing* which these names designate (“the thing signified” or “that which the name is meant to signify”). It does not include the *way* in which our words can express Him, or the “mode of signifying.” Since our words are taken from the human order, they always imply as such an imperfection.<sup>81</sup>

In what way can our words be united to express God? Are we capable of expressing Him? St. Thomas confesses that the only way in our power to connote the divine mode is negative. To exclude equivocation from our words and to succeed in signifying the mode of supereminence, we must know God as He is, we must seize the rich unity of a virtual and formally infinite multiplicity. But this is impossible for us. Thus we are reduced to saying: “God is eternal”—which means that He is not limited in time; or “He is infinite”—meaning that He is not limited in essence; or “He is immense”—and this means that He is not limited in space. If we depend upon the relations of the creature to God in order to signify that He is good, we can only say: “He is the Sovereign Good”; to point out *how* understanding He is: “He is the First Intelligence”; to indicate His mode of existence: “He is the First Being.” This procedure teaches us very little. We cannot refuse anything with regard to the First Cause; on the contrary, it is necessary to grant Him everything which implies perfection in His work. However, the statement of this necessity adds nothing to the first denial. The only thing left for us to do is

<sup>71</sup>*I Sent.*, d. XXXV, q. 1, a. 1, ad Sum.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup>“Dico autem aliqua praedicatorum nominum perfectionem absque defectu importare, quantum *ad illud, ad quod* significandum nomen fuit impositum; quantum vero *ad modum* significandi, omne nomen cum defectu est; nam nomine res exprimimus, eo modo quod intellectu concipimus. Intellectus autem noster, ex sensibilibus cognoscendi initium sumens, illum modum non transcendit, quem in rebus sensibilibus invenit; . . . et sic in omni nomine a nobis dicto, quantum ad modum significandi, imperfectio invenitur, quae Deo non competit” (*Z. Cont. Gent.*, 80).

humbly to acknowledge that we do not know what God is. We know only what He is not and what relation everything else bears to Him.<sup>74</sup> With respect to God, the question whether He exists "is not beyond our ken. However, all the terms which define Him in a certain way, attempting to answer the question "what He is," have, fundamentally, only a *negative or relative value*.<sup>75</sup>

It will be easier now to characterize St. Thomas' "analogism." This analogism is as a middle path or a summit between agnosticism and anthropomorphism. Although it clearly sacrifices all value of definition in relation to the formulas in which the divine is expressed, it recognizes that these formulas have an intellectual and objective value. According to St. Thomas, their value is to mark the relation of every perfection with its source. Between agnostic symbolism and anthropomorphism, St. Thomas attaches the relative to the transcendent. In this way, he can qualify one by the other. Then, too, he refuses to reduce the language of his theodicy to empty formulas or pure images which have no scientific value. Or, from another point of view, he respects the mystic about God, refusing thereby to lower God to the narrow measures of the human mind.

#### *Diverse conceptions about our relations with the divine*

Very clearly marked divergences separate Mr. Rudolph Otto from St. Thomas with regard to our ways of conceiving God. This is not surprising, once these divergences are accentuated in their respective ways of conceiving the genesis of our relations with Him. After briefly recalling the essential traits of Mr. Otto's positions on this matter, we shall undertake the detailed study of St. Thomas' positions. Finally we shall com-

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> "[Divinam substantiam] apprehendere non possumus cognoscendo quid est. sed aliqualem eius habemus notitiam cognoscendo *quod* now est . . . quia. in consideratione substantiae divinae, non possumus accipere *quid* quasi genus, nec distinctionem eius ab aliis rebus per affirmativas differentias accipere possumus, oportet eam accipere *per differentias negativas*" (*Ibid.*, 14).

pare the two doctrines, showing their similarities and their *differences*.

To perceive Mr. Otto's sentimentalism is only a matter of bringing out the essential traits, of marking out in very concise terms what Mr. Otto considers to be our relations with the divine—how they originate, develop, and expand. We reduce his system to sentimentalism. Here are the proper characteristics of his system. According to Mr. Otto, as we noted above, to speak of our relations with the divine would be to delve into schematization. The most proper formula to use would be to speak of our relations with the numinous, a mysterious object which is beyond every category and which sentiment alone attains. Our relations with Him are reduced to complex affective states which are of an irreducible genus entirely separated from every other genus. Mr. Otto classes these relations under the global name of religious feelings. After analyzing these feelings, he places them in the order in which they appear in the field of consciousness. First there is the *feeling of fright*, a fear of the numinous which is entirely different from the frights which we experience in the presence of any other object. Then there is the *feeling of stupor*, which immediately develops into what he calls "creature-consciousness." Little by little, the presence of this object is shown to have an irresistible attraction which, mixed with the stupor which always remains, arouses in us a *feeling of bewildering fascination*. Since the stupor remains, it constitutes the religious feeling essentially. If the feeling of fascination succeeds in provoking such feelings, this is explained by the fact that the numinous is revealed to us under the seizing traits of mystery, as the "*wholly other*."

These affective states are different from the similar feelings of moral exaltation because of the proper and entirely irreducible tonality of the former. It is evident that such a conception of our relations with the divine <sup>70</sup> possesses the

<sup>70</sup> We use the word "divine" in preference to "God," because the former is more vague, and thus more liable to acceptance on the part of those who support Mr. Otto's theory.

characteristics of all sentimentalism, for the most characteristic of sentimentalism lies in admitting only fading as the source of the higher life and true inspiration, and the means of coming into contact with certain realities.

St. Thomas' teaching satisfies the mind far more than does that of Mr. Otto; yet we must analyze very carefully the text in which this teaching is formulated, and place these texts in relation to the whole context. Only in this way shall we arrive at the full meaning and importance of each text. This procedure will demand many *excursus*, which, although seeming to take us away from our subject, are necessary if we want to understand St. Thomas' thought fully.

The term "reverential affection,"<sup>77</sup> in St. Thomas' theology, would correspond to Mr. Rudolph Otto's term, "religious feeling." St. Thomas' own term can be translated into the expression "feeling of reverence."<sup>78</sup> To discover and describe the way in which our relations with God are inspired and informed with reverence, according to St. Thomas, we must investigate how this feeling originates in our souls. Then we must understand how it can be fully developed and expanded, or, on the contrary, how it can deviate and be degraded. To make these researches truly fruitful, we must make a summary at the end of each step of the inquiry and thereby learn what the study has taught us about the profound nature of this feeling.

To what influences does St. Thomas attribute the birth in the human soul of a feeling of reverence towards God? What interior dispositions are required for the play of these influences upon the soul? St. Thomas has taken care to indicate all this in phrases pregnant with meaning. We shall begin by mentioning what he has to say on this matter. Then, with a view to penetrating into the full meaning of his statements, we shall try to bring out their implications in the light of our position. Perhaps in this way we shall succeed in

<sup>77</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 7, a. 6, c.

<sup>78</sup> It is well to pay special attention to St. Thomas' definition of "feeling of reverence" since modern usage of the word applies more to the feeling of reverence than to the reverential fear itself.

showing how his *teaching on this* matter is related to the whole of his system, and that it is truly commanded by the *positions he has taken with regard to* other essential points in his *theology*.

We are going to group St. Thomas' statements in a logical order, that is, as they complement one another and add to what has been said previously. The most concise and perhaps the most meaningful statement is a text taken from the *Contra Gentiles*, Book *III*, Chapter 119, which has to do with religion. In this text St. Thomas furnishes the following reflection on the nature and motives of the movement which inclines us to experience reverence for God:

*By a certain natural instinct* man feels obliged to show in his own way *reverence for God*, Who is the principle of all good and from Whom is man's being.

What we must remember from this text is that our reverence for God is a *natural* movement of our souls, and that the motives which inspire reverence lie in the fact that God is our Beginning. He is the origin of our being and all good we receive.

Another text, taken from the *Summa Theologiae*, points out how our manner of manifesting our reverence to God is *natural*, and how it is *conventional*. St. Thomas makes this statement in the answer to the third objection of the second article, question 81 (IIa, IIae)—a question which deals with the virtue of religion in itself:

Man does certain things to manifest his reverence for God *because of the dictate of natural reason*, but that man do these or those determined things, is not a dictate of natural reason, but a determination of *divine or human law*.

Finally we have two complementary texts which bring out in detail the motives which cause a great reverence for God in the soul.

The first is taken from the third article of the eighty-second question (IIa IIae), which has to do with devotion, the prin-



cial act of the virtue of religion. We shall soon see the close connection of this act with the feeling of reverence.

Meditation must be the cause of devotion . . . inasmuch as through meditation man realizes that he must give himself to divine service. A twofold consideration leads man to this realization: one is on the part of divine goodness and benefits . . . this consideration arouses love, which is the proximate cause of devotion. The other . . . is on the part of man considering his defects by which he realizes that he needs help if he is to imitate God. This consideration excludes presumption, through which one is impeded from becoming subject to God, since he rests upon his own power.

This idea is taken up again in the fourth article of the same question, namely, that there is a twofold reflection required on our part if we are to become conscious of the true attitudes that we must have toward God. First there must be the reflection on God's goodness towards us and on His benefits. Then we must consider our own deficiencies and neediness.

Man feels naturally inclined to recognize his dependence upon God, especially as a remedy to the state of his contingency. St. Thomas brings this out in very expressive terms a little further on, in the same treatise on religion, in the first article of the eighty-fifth question:

*Natural reason* dictates that man become subject to some superior *because of the defects* which he feels in himself—defects in which he must be helped and directed. Whatever this superior being may be, all men call it *God*. Just as in natural things the inferior are naturally subject to the superior, so also natural reason commands man *by a natural inclination* to manifest subjection and honor according to his means to what is above man.

This text offers many precisions which must be carefully noted. It insists upon the natural character of our first relations with God. It determines in what these relations consist: namely, in a twofold movement which inclines us to recognize our dependence by an attitude of submission and reverence towards God. This movement of the soul, quite spontaneous on our part, requires only that we realize our neediness and absolute dependence upon this Being which everyone calls



God. This feeling of reverence is natural to us, and can be experienced by the humblest human soul. Even a confused knowledge of God is all that is needed to have Him inspire us by letting us know sufficiently that He is our Beginning.

Before taking up the implications of these texts according to St. Thomas' teaching, we must first make a resume of what we have learned. The texts we have cited concern the psychological origins of our relations with God. St. Thomas demands a twofold condition on our part: to enter into relations with God, we must first know Him. For this even a confused knowledge about God suffices. Then, what is more important, we must have realized our state of dependence upon Him. This realization takes place most frequently only in moments of dejection, in which we realize our indigence and deficiencies, and, moreover, recognize at what point God is the *Beginning* of what we are and of what we possess. It is then that we experience a spontaneous movement, a quite natural inclination to show Him our reverence—as a debt, or, as St. Thomas precises in the text of the *Summa* which we have cited, to recognize our subjection to Him and to render Him the honor which is due to Him. Our relations with God thus begin *spontaneously* and *naturally* with reverence.

We shall not fully understand the texts we have just cited unless we succeed in resolving the following problems: first, "What precisely does St. Thomas mean by reverence?" Then, "Why do our relations with God begin with reverence?"

In St. Thomas the problem of the psychological origins of our relations with God is placed on the natural plane. Thus the Angelic Doctor is faithful to his usual procedure, which consists in analyzing the aspirations of human nature before the activities of grace. Most frequently he does not consider the actual conditions of our nature after the fall until he has determined the normal ways in which human nature would have developed if this nature had always obeyed its fundamental demands. This explains why St. Thomas seems so preoccupied with determining whether religion responds to a natural need in man. We must, however, be careful to understand the exact meaning of his answer.

In the first text cited from St. Thomas, he says that we feel reverence for God because of the impetus of natural instinct. This instinct is made explicit and manifest at the moment when we realize what God means for us, at the moment when our knowledge about God, no matter how confused it may be, takes on all its meaning in relation to our own lives. But how does this instinct of nature arise in us? In what exact meaning can it be called a need of nature? To understand these difficulties we are going to try to orient ourselves in relation to the whole of St. Thomas' theology.

Often in his theological works St. Thomas returns to a point of doctrine which will be of great help to us. This point is the natural desire which every human intellect has to see God. This desire reveals a natural tendency of our intellects to know God as He is. Although this tendency is confused at the beginning of the life of the intellect, it is accentuated and formed into a gradually more explicit desire as the intellect advances in knowledge. According to St. Thomas, these are the stages of the development of this desire. By the power of the active intellect, the passive intellect can know everything which can be known by means of sensible things. But this kind of knowledge cannot constitute man's last end, since it leaves him dissatisfied. However, when the last end is gained, the natural desire is appeased. On the contrary, no matter how far one advances in knowledge drawn from sensible things, he always has a desire to know something else. This desire is of such a nature that, knowing an effect, we want to know its cause. Once we know the exterior particularities of any object, we are not satisfied until we know the essence of that object. The natural desire to know cannot be appeased until we know the first cause, not in any way whatsoever, but in its essence. The last end of an intellectual creature, St Thomas concludes, lies in seeing God in His Essence.<sup>7\*</sup>

\* "Virtus intellectus agentis est. ut phantasmata quae sunt intelligibilia in potentia faciat intelligibilia in actu . . . ; phantasmata autem sunt accepta per sensum. Per intellectum igitur agentem intellectus noster in actum redocitur respectu horum intelligibilium tantum, in quorum notitiam per sensibilia iuxta sumus

It is important to remember that the natural tendency of our minds to know God is presupposed to all natural knowledge about Him, even the most confused. If we spontaneously show God reverence as soon as we realize—even in a confused manner—that God is our beginning, we do so on the presupposition of a natural inclination of our wills to subject themselves to whatever is superior to them. This is a natural *instinct which depends* upon the more general tendency of the will to love God above all things. Among these diverse tendencies there is a perfect subordination on the natural plane: they are all ordained to the possession of man's good. They proceed from one another, and will be truly at rest only when man's good has been attained. In this light our relations with God ultimately do not begin with an act of knowing God, even though this be the first, but in the very nature of our intellect as it is in the very nature of our will that we must find the natural inclination to revere God. The first acts of these faculties are only spontaneous manifestations of these tendencies. Having established this point, we can determine what St. Thomas means by "reverence."

Every time St. Thomas speaks about reverence, he identifies it with fear. He even speaks of reverential fear. Evidently he considers reverential fear as a separate fear, one which has a very special character.<sup>80</sup> He is careful to demonstrate how this fear is distinct from the other kinds of fear. Since it is a movement of the soul, we can say that it receives its generic character from the faculty or potency which experiences it. Its

devenire. Impossibile est autem in tali cognitione ultimum hominis finem consistere: nam ultimo fine adepto desiderium naturale qui escit. . . . Impossibile est autem naturale desiderium esse vanum. . . . Tale est autem in nobis sciendi desiderium, ut cognoscentes effectum, desideremus cognoscere causam, et in quacumque re, cognitis quibuscumque eius circumstantiis, non qui escit nostrum desiderium, quousque eius essentiam cognoscamus. Non igitur naturale desiderium sciendi potest quietari in nobis, quousque primam causam cognoscamus non quocumque modo, sed per eius essentiam. Prima autem causa Deus est, . . . est igitur finis ultimus intellectualis creaturae, Deum per essentiam videre " (*Comp. Theol.*, 104).

<sup>80</sup> Q. D. de Spe, q. 1, a. 4, ad 2um.

specific notes are derived from the object which can arouse this fear. However, we must not forget that the generic element itself is specified by a more universal object. It should cause no surprise to find St. Thomas explaining the true nature of reverence in such a way. He is merely adhering to the principles which enabled him to elaborate, as an integral part of his theology, a very exact psychology of human conduct—with a consideration of the many rational and emotional components of human conduct. In accord with his first principle, he transposes his observations on transitory movement to the order of immanent activity,<sup>81</sup> thus using the physical knowledge of inanimate being, delineated in his comments on Aristotle's physics, to explain the animate kingdom. For St. Thomas the degrees of immanence begin with the lowest form of life.<sup>82</sup> He explains the nature of psychic activity by an analogy with the physical realm. Yet St. Thomas is careful to bring out all the distinctions and correctives which prevent one from confusing the two orders. In general, he compares powers to act with movable being, action with motion, and the objects toward which our activity leads with movers. In the light of these analogies, we have the following axioms which he formulates quite frequently:

Every object is compared to the operation of the soul either as an agent or as an end.<sup>83</sup>

The diversity of species is according to form; the diversity of genera, according to matter: for those things are generically diverse which have diverse matter.<sup>84</sup>

Just as matter is determined to one form through one agent, so also is a passive potency determined to one specific act by the nature of one object.<sup>85</sup>

In the light of these principles we can better perceive the intentions in St. Thomas' procedure in trying to determine the *subject* and *object* of reverence.

<sup>81</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I. q. 9, a. 1, c., and ad lum.

<sup>82</sup> *IV Cont. Gent.*, 11.

<sup>84</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I-II. q. 54, su 1. ad lum.

<sup>85</sup> *In II de Anima*, lect. 6, n. 305.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 1, c.

Reverence is an activity *of our souls of a distinct genus, and that by reason of its subject*: not by reason of what the Scholastics call the "*subject quod*" the radical subject of all our human conduct, that is, the very essence of our souls,<sup>80</sup> but the "*subject quo*" that is, the faculty or potency by which the soul experiences reverence for God. The soul is not immediately operative, but operates through its potencies.<sup>87</sup> Reverence is fear, but it is not a passion of the soul. Therefore, it is denominated fear only by *analogy*, for it is "felt" by the *will*. *Its proper subject is, then, not the sensible appetite, but the rational*. It cannot be otherwise for St. Thomas, since reverence is experienced *with regard to God*, Who is not a sensible object but a reality of the spiritual order. From this, one can see how reverence can be a sentiment, and with what precise meaning St. Thomas speaks of "reverential affection." Here are the most expressive texts on this subject. When St. Thomas answers an objection based upon a text from St. John Damascene<sup>88</sup>—an objection trying to prove that reverence is not a *fear*, since it is not enumerated among the different species in the passions—he states that reverence belongs to the genus of fear which has a relation only to God as its object:

Damascene divides fear as it is a passion of the soul. But the division of fear given here is according to its ordination to God.<sup>80</sup>

Since this fear has no other relation than to God, it should, like hope, be placed in the will as its subject. This is how St. Thomas argues with regard to hope, a theological virtue:

The act of the virtue of hope cannot belong to the sensitive appetite, because the good which is the principal object of this virtue is not some sensible good, but the *divine good*. Therefore, hope is in the superior appetite, which is called the will, as in its proper subject.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 58, a. 2, c.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, I, q. 77, a. 6, c. and a. 7, c.

<sup>88</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 2, ad lum.

*M Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 2, ad lum.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 18, a. 1, c.

The answer to the first objection in the same article revives the objection in the same way and for the same reasons. These texts bring out not only the subject of reverence, but also its object. Since these two realities determine each other, we cannot come to identify one without having recourse to the other.<sup>92</sup>

Since the *object* of reverence is God, it transcends the sensible world and attracts, as such, only our spiritual faculties. However, let us make further distinctions. Because reverence is a fear, its object must be an arduous reality—not a good, but an evil. In this, reverence differs from hope.<sup>3</sup> It differs from sorrow inasmuch as its object is a *future* arduous evil, not one that is *present*.<sup>4</sup> It has to do with a future arduous evil which, although difficult to bear, can nevertheless be avoided. In this we have the proper characteristic of reverence<sup>5</sup>—a characteristic which is the cause of the movement of flight.<sup>60</sup>

All that seems to be contradictory. God is the Sovereign Good. Even if we consider Him on the natural plane, how can God inspire us with fear? This can happen, St. Thomas explains, to the extent that He is "*infinite Justice*," just as we hope in Him because He is "*infinite Mercy*."<sup>97</sup> Fear has a twofold object: it has first the *evil* from which one flees; then it has the *reality from which evil can come*. Since God is goodness itself, He cannot be feared for Himself, but because evils can come to us from Him in our relations with Him. Under this second aspect God becomes an object of fear.<sup>9</sup> He can reduce us to nothing, or He can inflict punishments upon us. On our part, we can offend Him and thus break our relations with Him. Thus, in summary, one can see how we fear God's Justice more than God Himself. All of this will become clearer when we put it in the context of redeemed nature.

For the moment let us remember only that it is on our part.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, ad lum.

<sup>92</sup> *In II de Anima*, lect. 6, n. 808.

<sup>93</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 41, a. 2, c.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, ad Sum.

*Ibid.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 11, c.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

*Ibid.*, a. 1, ad Sum.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 1, c.

and in our relations with God, that we should fear an evil which can gravely endanger these relations.<sup>100</sup> We shall try to determine this evil now. What is, precisely, this future arduous evil which is difficult to bear and yet possible to avoid—the evil which keeps us in an attitude of reverence before God? To determine it, we must recall at what moments reverence for God arises in the soul, for this reverence arises, as we said before, when we realize our absolute need in relation to Him. It is at such a time that we perceive the infinite distance which separates us from Him. Then it appears clearly, and with frightening lucidity, that the greatest evil for us would be to try to become equal to Him, or to compare ourselves to Him.<sup>100</sup>

St. Thomas invites us to pursue our researches further. The evil from which we flee when we feel reverence for God is, therefore, the attempt to make ourselves His equals. This evil is always dependent upon another evil remaining in our very being, namely, that of our state of radical contingency in relation to God. This latter is a *present* evil which establishes us, inasmuch as we are creatures, at an infinite distance from the Creator-Being. This evil inspires us with the fear of an ever-possible future evil: the inane temptation to make ourselves God's equals. That is why, in these moments of lucidity, the soul is seized with fear. It contracts into its own smallness. The following are St. Thomas' own words:

Here is the third *natural defect*, according to which every creature is infinitely distant from God. This defect will never be taken away. In respect to this defect there is *reverential fear*, which will show reverence under the Creator because of the consideration of His majesty. This fear makes the creature leap down into his own smallness.<sup>101</sup>

St. Thomas also provides more profound reflections about the true nature of our reverence for God. We have only to consent to follow him in his analyses on this matter. Already

M "Malum culpae non est a Deo sicut ab auctore, sed est a nobis ipsis, inquantum a Deo recedimus" (*Ibid.*, ad Sum). "[Deus] potest esse obiectum timoris; inquantum . . . ab ipso, vel per comparationem ad ipsum, nobis potest aliquod malum imminere" (*Ibid.*, c.).

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 7, a. 1, c.

<sup>101</sup> *Q. D. de Spe.*, q. 1, a. 4, ad 2um.



he has told us that reverence consists essentially in a fear of making ourselves God's equals. He has pointed out that on our part this fear would take hold of us when we realize our absolute dependence upon God. But this reason does not satisfy him completely. We shall soon see why. The most fundamental motive, which incites us not to dare to make ourselves God's equals, is the fear of being separated from Him. Thus, as St. Thomas explains clearly in other places, reverence brings with it a twofold movement of flight, each movement being closely dependent upon the other. The Angelic Doctor calls these movements "flight from separation from God" and "flight from making oneself God's equal."<sup>102</sup> The first flight is the principle of the second, but both are two attitudes of the soul dictated by the same consideration of God. Here it is very evident that St. Thomas is careful to show the relation of the fear which is reverence to love. (It is necessary to see the relation between this treatise and St. Thomas' psychology on the passions, for he speaks of the fear "experienced" by the will through analogy with the *passion* of fear, as we have mentioned already.) For him, every passion depends upon love in order to arise in the soul.<sup>103</sup> What love of God is in question here (for we fear to be separated from *God*)? We have only to recall the first text cited at the beginning of our researches on the psychological origins of the feeling of reverence. We begin to experience reverence for God at the moment when we realize that He is our *Beginning* <sup>104</sup>\* Now we must seek to answer the original intriguing question: *why do our relations with God originate spontaneously in reverence?*

The text to which we must make reference is that to which we have just alluded, for this text implicitly contains everything we are looking for. We have only to ask St. Thomas to explain it if we want to solve the problem which preoccupies us:

<sup>102</sup> *Q. D. de Verit.*, q. 28, a. 4, ad 4um.

<sup>103</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 26, a. 1, ad 2um.

<sup>104</sup> "Dei cultus religio nominatur, quia huiusmodi actibus quodammodo homo vel ligatur ut ab eo non evagetur, et quia etiam quodam naturali instinctu vel obfoetum sentit Deum ut suo modo reverentiam ei impendat, a quo est sui esse et ornatus boni principium" (*III Cont. Gent.*, 119, c.).



By a certain natural instinct man *feels obliged* to show reverence to God, Who is the source of his being and of every good—in his own way.<sup>105</sup>

Let us pay *strict attention to all* the words. It is by the most spontaneous natural sentiment that we feel obliged to manifest our reverence for God, from Whom we have being and all our *possessions*. Reverence is revealed to be both a *natural sentiment and an obligation, a debt* to God, our Principle.

What does the fact that God is our Principle imply for us? Of what do we become conscious when we realize that God is our Principle? The implication is that we depend upon Him wholly, that is, not only in the order of existence, but also in the order of activity. He is more than *a Principle* for us. He is *the first Principle*, our Creator and our first Mover. God has created all of us. Whatever existence we have comes from Him, or more precisely He gives us *absolutely and freely* the whole gift of existing in a *continual, unceasing* manner. At each instant we are the beneficiaries of His benevolence and beneficence. We have been created *by Him-*, it is out of sheer goodness that He conserves us in existence. He could justly annihilate us at any moment. Moreover, we belong to Him, for it can be only *for Himself* that He has created us and that He wishes to conserve us in being.

Thus God realizes the notion of principle *by an eminent title*. For according to St. Thomas, to be a principle requires communication on the part of the principle to that which depends upon it: a benefit which can result only from a superiority of being in the one who gives this benefit. In this light the principle of anyone bestows a benefit in his regard. This benefit places the benefactor in a state of *excellence* in relation to the beneficiary. For St. Thomas, then, the notion of principle connotes the ideas of beneficence and excellence.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> "Homo efficitur diversimode aliis debitor secundum eorum diversam excellentiam, et diversa *beneficia* ab eis suscepta. In utroque autem Deus summum obtinet locum, et qui *excellentissimus* est, et est nobis essendi et gubernationis primum principium" (*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 101, a. 1).

The *notion of paternity* is bound up with the notion of principle. To see how our reverence for God is connected with our love of God, we must determine in what sense He is our Father. The first determination must be on the natural plane. Later we shall determine this paternity on the plane of grace, in which we become His sons by adoption, that is, by sharing in His divine nature. He is our Father in so far as we owe Him everything, in so far as we are His creatures. And we are creatures *continually*. Therefore, inasmuch as God is the first principle of the creation and government of the world, He has a greater right to the title of Father than our parents or our country, according to St. Thomas' own explicit statement? <sup>107</sup>

It follows from this that our relations with God should be modeled on those of children with their parents. In gratitude for the benefit of life, children should manifest *piety* for their parents. This very complex sentiment implies, on the part of the children, love, reverence, and submission. St. Thomas' very detailed analysis will be very helpful in this matter? <sup>108</sup>

The most instructive element lies in the order which St. Thomas establishes among the various sentiments which make up filial piety. Since the gift of life is a communication, and establishes a union between a father and his son (so that St. Thomas says that the son is "in a certain way a part of him," that is, the father), <sup>109</sup> the normal relations between son and father should be relations of love. It is true that these relations are destined to expand into that friendship which St. Thomas calls "the friendship according to superabundance" or "the love of excellence." <sup>110</sup> But we must carefully note the expressions which St. Thomas uses to name this friendship. It is a distinct friendship which can exist among persons of un-

<sup>107</sup> "Deus longe excellentiori modo est principium essendi et gubernationis quam pater vel patria. . . . Sed ea quae sunt creaturarum per quamdam superexcellentiam et causalitatem transferuntur in Deum. . . . Unde per excellentiam pietas cultus Dei nominatur, sicut et Deus *excellenter* dicitur Pater noster\* a. S. ad 2um).

<sup>108</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II. q. 101.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 57, a. 4, c.

<sup>110</sup> *In VIII Ethic.* lect. 7. n. 1W5.

equal conditions,<sup>111</sup> but several elements are demanded for the existence of this type of friendship. Although there is only love and beneficence in the relation of the father to his child, in the relation of the child to the father there is not the same gratuity; for the one who owes everything (the child) is not limited to making a proof of a mere return of affection. The child should also show reverence and submission towards his parents. The love which he experiences for them should spontaneously and naturally urge him on to further acts. In this light, filial love can exist only when previously expressed in reverence and submission. Why? St. Thomas tells us that it belongs to the very nature of this friendship.<sup>112</sup> Every friendship presupposes a certain equality among the friends; but in this case the state of excellence of the principle in relation to the beneficiary impedes an absolute equality. Friendship can be established between a superior and an inferior only on the condition that each proves his love in proportion to the dignity of the other.<sup>113</sup> This supposes on the part of the inferior (the child) that he does not demand from his parents the same attitudes to which he himself is obliged.<sup>114</sup> Among these attitudes the first to be adopted is to respect the distance which separates him from them. Then the child must recognize his dependence upon them. St. Thomas distinguishes these two mutual attitudes by the names of reverence and submission. According to him, the proper role of these attitudes is to insure a certain equality by supplying an excess of deference which will make up for the inequality of their conditions. In this way, their relations will expand into a reciprocal love.

¥ In all friendships which result from the superabundance of one person in relation to another, there must be *proportional* loving, namely, that the better one be loved more than he loves. For since each is loved *according to his dignity*, there seems to result a *certain equality*, namely, a proportional equality which seems to belong to friendship.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1626.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1627.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, lect. 8, n. 1649.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 1ed. 7, n. 1620.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 1630.

Let us return to the case of our relations with God. We can now see why on our part these relations must lx: marked by reverence from the very start. As we have said before, they must be modeled upon the relations of filial piety between children and their parents. St. Thomas has already furnished the reason: God is *the Father of every creature by an eminent title*.

As in the case of our parents, St. Thomas sees in God's benefits in the continual gifts which He makes to us of being and of natural goods, the basis of a natural love between God and us.<sup>110</sup> This is the natural love of a part for its whole, a love which extends to preference for the good of the whole to the individual good of the part.<sup>117</sup> Let us note that St. Thomas uses the same terminology to mark both our relations with God and the relations of a son with his father. We are as a *part* of God; we share in His Being. If we experience love for God, we do this only by noticing His benefits, the bonds which unite us with Him, and what He has in common with us. When we take notice of His benefits, we discover our absolute dependence upon Him. When we see this, we notice everything which separates Him from us, *the infinite distance* between Him Who is *Being by His very Essence* and ourselves who possess being only by participation. From the moment that we discover He is our principle we realize His beneficence and His excellence. His beneficence invites us to love; His excellence should keep us in an attitude of reverence:

The object of love is good; but the object of honor or reverence is some excellent thing.<sup>118</sup>

This love, then, should be translated first into reverence, then into submission. However, this reverence and this submission arc *in a unique genus* resulting from the reception of benefits and from the sovereign excellence of God.

<sup>110</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 2, ad lum.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 3, c.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 81, a. 4, ad Sum.

*In both, God takes the highest place, for He is the most excellent being and for us the first principle of existence and government.*<sup>1,0</sup>

The situation of *inequality could not be greater*. Therefore, if *love is to be established between God and His creature*, this Jove must be of a very special nature and in fact unique.

A singular excellence belongs to God, insofar as Ik' *infinitely transcends* everything according to every excess possible.<sup>120</sup>

In what precisely does the resulting fear, which St. Thomas calls the fear of being separated from God, consist? Fundamentally it is a fear of being annihilated by God, "*fear of annihilation.*" The gift of being unites us with God; the return to nothingness would definitively separate us from Him. We have no strict right to exist or to be conserved in being. On God's part it is pure gratuity; our annihilation would be no injustice to us. This fear never disappears completely, for it bears on an evil which always remains possible. To the extent that our love for God is purified and intensified, the fear of being annihilated is accompanied with the fear of offending God, "*the fear of offense*" We too can take the initiative of breaking our relations with God. Our faults touch Him directly; they can separate us from Him. Moreover, the fear of being separated from God's infinite beneficence directs us to protest our submission to Him upon Whom we are conscious of being absolutely dependent.

Now we can group together the information we have gathered in the course of this investigation and manifest in a synthetic manner the why and how of the origins of our relations with God according to St. Thomas' conception. As soon as we become conscious of our state of dependence, contingency, and absolute neediness in relation to God, there arises in us the fear of the evil of being separated from Him and His beneficence. What is first in us is the desire to remain united with Him. This is a natural love which we experience for Him Whose being we share.

*Ibid.*, q. 101, a. 1, c.

*1,0 Ibid.*, q. 81, a. 4, c.

This fear of being separated from God is precised and perfected in the fear of making ourselves His equals. This latter fear is inspired by the former. From the very moment when we realize our condition of being creatures and the infinite distance which separates us from our first principle, we are seized by the fear of daring to make ourselves His equals instead of recognizing our dependence.

In this light, what our wills first experience spontaneously (when through the consciousness of our misery and our nothingness God suddenly appears to us according to what He means to us) is the fear of ever yielding to the temptation of making ourselves His equals and of not submitting ourselves to Him from Whom we have all. These are natural and spontaneous movements of retreat into our own smallness and of submission to His divine goodness. It is in this way that our natural love is first expressed, for at the same moment we realize that every other attitude would separate us from Him.

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*(To be concluded.)*

## THE PLACE OF RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT IN SAINT THOMAS

*{Concluded}*

### *Possible developments of our relations with the divine*

For St. Thomas the feeling of reverence is a *natural sentiment*. He teaches that, to have this sentiment arise in our souls, we must know God at least confusedly. To become conscious of our dependence upon Him as the principle of our being and of all our goods, we must first experience how much we need Him. In this light, the attitudes of reverence or submission to God, which we spontaneously adopt upon recognizing His excellence and our dependence, are inspired by the clear vision we suddenly have about what God means to us. The depth and intensity of our reverence for God are thus proportionate to what we know about Him. For some degree of reverence a confused knowledge about God is sufficient, but greater precision in knowing God is demanded if this reverence is to endure and flourish in the soul. Moreover, as we have noted before, our reverence for God can easily deteriorate into superstition and idolatry, if our intellect adheres to errors concerning God.

In determining the multiple causes which have a part in the development of our relations with God we shall try to ascertain which are apt to bring about the deterioration of these relations, and which are apt to accomplish their rectification and intensification.

St. Thomas considers this problem in his treatise on religion.<sup>121</sup> We shall try first to understand the elements of solution which he offers in this place. Then we shall try to pene-

<sup>121</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 94, a. 4, c.

trate into the immediate reasons which he gives by considering the whole of his theology, especially by considering what he says with regard to original sin.

St. Thomas enumerates and classifies these factors when he deals with idolatry and superstition in the *Summa*. These latter are the two forms which our relations with God can take on when they degenerate by excess.

However, before taking up this consideration, there is a historical question which must be taken into account: "At what moment in the history of various peoples do we find the deterioration of the natural instinct which would lead them to manifest their reverence for God and to submit themselves to Him?" St. Thomas is of the opinion that idolatry did not exist in the first ages of the world. The remembrance of the creation of the world, which was still fresh in the minds of the people, made the knowledge of the One God vivid in the human mind.<sup>122</sup> Now we must see what would contribute to the appearance of these deteriorations in the personal history of each man.

St. Thomas admits that the devil can do his part; but if the devil can influence us, this is only because our nature is already defective, either because of intellectual ignorance, or because of disorderly affections.<sup>1</sup> Let us continue to follow St. Thomas in his analysis and try to discover the order of causality which he establishes in the interplay of these different factors, and the degree of efficiency which he assigns to each. When he shows the limitation of the devil's role, the Angelic Doctor takes notice of the fact that man and the devil act in accord and simultaneously: the devil only seals idolatry by achieving man's deception. Man is disposed to error because of his poor nature.

<sup>122</sup> "Dicendum quod in prima aetate non fuit idolatria propter recentem memoriam creationis mundi, ex qua adhuc vigeat cognitio unius Dei in mente hominum" (*Ibid.*, ad Sum).

<sup>123</sup> "Dicendum quod causa dispositiva idolatriae fuit, ex parte naturae hominis defectus vel per ignorantiam intellectus, vel per inordinationem affectus" (ZW\_ ad Ium).



The cause of idolatry was *consummative* on the part of the devils, who offered themselves to be worshipped by men, by giving answers in idols.<sup>124</sup>

Whatever form superstition may take, from the moment that the demons contribute their bit, they use their ingenuity to deceive ("deceivers of souls") and seduce souls by clever lies. *If men give* themselves over to this game very enthusiastically, this is because the demons find them willing accomplices. The most fundamental element in this complicity is the ignorance of most men concerning the true God. When man is left to his own resources, a somewhat precise natural knowledge of God is difficult to acquire. Moreover, man's imagination is apt to deceive him, even if he has the leisure to undertake this study.

Thus the human race would remain in the very great darkness of ignorance, if only the way of reason was left to man as a means of knowing God.<sup>125</sup>

In this light, it is not surprising that the religious instinct should be directed to other objects, no matter how natural the instinct itself may be. When explicating the proper object of religious instinct, it is very easy for man to deviate and fall into the grossest errors.

Furthermore, the religious instinct can be mistaken in following its own bent. It is definitely a sentiment and as such has to be guided by understanding. When understanding itself is seduced by error, anything can happen. Then sentiment encroaches upon knowledge and slowly misdirects man to the worst religious aberrations.

St. Thomas distinguishes two factors which will produce such excess of sentiment: disorderly affections and the natural pleasure which man has in creating representations for himself.<sup>126</sup> First let us consider disorderly affections. This disorder is a veneration or love for beings to which we attribute

<sup>1,4</sup> *Ibid.*, c.

<sup>1281</sup> *Coni. Gent.*, 4.

<sup>13n</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 04, a. 4. e.

absolute value by granting them cult and reverence which we had formerly reserved for God. The other source of disorder and deviation appears when man, indulging in his taste for creating representations of what he loves and adores, comes to the point of being excessively attracted by the sensible. When this happens, man usually lets himself be seduced by the representation itself and gives to the sensible thing as such the respect and deference that should be given only to what the thing represents. Since the devil plays his part in this, one can easily imagine where such a practice will end.

St. Thomas marks the order of causality in the interplay of these factors. The devil succeeds in deceiving souls only because they have in themselves everything which disposes them to accept the devil's lies as truths.

There is a twofold cause of idolatry: one is *dispositive*, this is on man's part; . . . the other is *consummatioe*, this is on the devil's part.<sup>127</sup>

In the same article of the *Summa* on idolatry', St. Thomas tells us that we must look deeper for the real explanation of these disorders. In response to an objection, St. Thomas says that in man's nature there are dispositions which incline him to the sin of idolatry, and that these very dispositions come from sin: "And this too pertains to sin."<sup>128</sup> The Angelic Doctor thus invites us to consider the problem of the deviations of our relations with God in relation to the whole of his theology on the Redemption. There we learn that if the best in us becomes the worst, it is because from the very beginning man has perverted his relations with God by letting himself be induced by the devil to attitudes of pride and revolt against God. The devil now finds access into the fallen soul.

It is easy to see how our reverence for God can degenerate into superstition in the state of original sin, once we see exactly what superstition is. We know already what causes come into play to make our religious instinct deviate. Now we must find out what the deviation is in itself.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, ad lum.

According to St. Thomas, superstition is an excess (and thereby a vice) in the way we manifest our reverence and submission for God.<sup>120</sup> Tin's can happen in two ways: either it is made to God in an improper way, or it is made to someone or something other than God through those respects and sentiments which are due to God alone.<sup>130</sup> The latter is the more serious; it is properly idolatry according to St. Thomas. Since it is the typical manifestation of superstition, we shall concern ourselves with this form alone for the present.

Let us try to isolate the elements which constitute this disorder. It consists in what modern psychologists would call a "transfer of object." One gives to poor created realities sentiments which should be experienced only in the presence of the Creator:

It is of the very nature of divine excellence to be singular and *incommunicable*, but through idolatry someone *communicates* divine reverence *to another*.<sup>131</sup>

Here it is not a matter of any reality whatsoever, but only of those which our imagination and sensibility have *deified* upon the devil's suggestion. As in every grave sin, the soul completely turns away from God and seeks its end in the created order. Furthermore, in this case the imagination is seduced to such an extent that it gives a *divine value* to certain realities and covers them with mystery. Here perversion is realized on the sensible plane; man is too ignorant and too spiritually weak to offer any serious resistance. Thus the devil succeeds

<sup>120</sup> " . . . superstitio est vitium religioni oppositum secundum excessum . . . quia exhibet cultum divinum vel cui non debet, vel eo modo quo non debet " (*Ibid.*, q. 92, a. 1, c).

<sup>130</sup> " p0(es[ enjm divinus cultus exhiberi vel cui exhibendus est, scilicet Deo vero, modo tamen indebito; et haec est prima superstitionis species.—Vel ei cui non dclwt exhiberi, scilicet cuicumque creaturae. Et hoc est aliud superstitionis genus, quod in multas species dividitur, secundum diversos fines divini cultus [scilicet, inquantum istae species contrariantur finibus divini cultus, secundum quod] ordinatur . . . divinus cultus ad reverentiam Deo exhibendam . . . ad hoc quod homo instruatut a Deo, quem colit [et] . . . ad quamdam directionem humanorum actuum secundum instituta Dei " (*Ibid.*, a. 2, c).

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 97, a. 4, ad 3um.

in his deception inasmuch as these created realities take on a divine value and inspire man with sentiments of total love, mixed with the fear and deference which previously he gave to God alone. This is a "transfer of object" which brings with it a fatal degradation of that reverence which now degenerates from its state of spiritual tonality into a fear dominating the senses. In this light, idolatry presents the spectacle of a sensibility which (thanks to the already assured complications) succeeds in imposing the pursuit of its own object as man's end and in giving the value of cult to the passions of love and fear which this object inspires through the devil's suggestions.

This sensibility enslaves man instead of serving him. The intellect and the will contribute to the production of gods according to the measure of such a sensibility. For St. Thomas such attitudes in man can be explained only in the light of their definitive cause, that is, the lamentable state of disorder in which man was left after original sin. Before the fall, man lived in perfect conformity of will with his Creator. Like the facts we shall now mention about original sin and its consequences, this is an article of faith which we must accept as such. With St. Thomas, we shall try to understand this article as well as possible.<sup>13</sup> Before the fall, man lived in a state which St. Thomas calls original justice. As a gift on God's part the sensible in man was perfectly subject to the spiritual, the body to the soul, and the latter to God.<sup>14</sup> Adam's sin was an act of insubordination to God; he preferred himself to his Creator and decided to seek his own end in himself.<sup>15</sup> According to

<sup>13</sup>1 / *Cont. Gent.*, 9.

... iustitia originalis . . . erat quoddam donum gratiae toti humanae naturae divinitus collatum in primo parente. Quod quidem primus homo amisit per primum peccatum" (*Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 81. a. 2, c).

"Dicendum quod per iustitiam originalem perfecte ratio continebat inferiores animae vires, et ipsa ratio a Deo perficiebatur ei subiecta" (*Ibid.*, q. 85. a. 5. c)

"... per peccatum primi parentis sublata est originalis iustitia. per quam non solum inferiores animae vires continebantur sub ratione absque omni deordinatione. sed totum corpus continebatur sub anima absque omni defectu" (*Ibid.*, a. 5, c).

"peccatum . . . originale . . . est quaedam inordinata dispositio ipsius naturae (*Ibid.*, q. 82, a. 1, ad 2um).

St. Thomas, this was formally for man the deprivation of original *justice*; his spirituality was forever turned away from God.<sup>137</sup>

The consequences of this sin were lamentable. Among them was the infection of all of Adam's descendants. The soul, turned away from God, lost its control over the body; suffering and death *followed*. The will had to admit its incapability to master sensibility and man's other potencies. After the fall, man found that he possessed a multitude of appetites which were mutually opposed, constantly conflicting in their demands because each appetite sought its own good.<sup>137</sup> Having wished to throw off God's yoke, man became the slave of his sensibility, which was now abandoned to itself and given over to its own concupiscence.

Still worse, the disorder reigning in the soul of the first man was transmitted by generation and became the normal state of all men. From then on, each man came into the world as a sinner.<sup>138</sup> In effect, we must believe that we have all sinned in Adam and that we share in his act of disobedience and its consequences. In Scholastic terminology, St. Thomas says that Adam was the principal cause of sin, human semination is the intermediary, the instrumental cause by which sin is transmitted, and sin is found in the soul of each man as its proper subject.<sup>138</sup> Let us note, finally, that in each man sin appears as an innate habit contracted at birth.<sup>140</sup> It affects more the

““privatio originalis iustitiae, per quam voluntas subdebatur Deo, est formale in peccato originali” (*Ibid.*, a. 3, c).

187 “ex aversione voluntatis a Deo consecuta est inordinatio in omnibus aliis animae viribus . . . Inordinatio autem aliarum virium animae praecipue in hoc attenditur, quod inordinate convertuntur ad bonum commutabile; quae quidem inordinatio communi nomine potest dici concupiscentia” (*Ibid.*).

““secundum fidem catholicam est tenendum quod primum peccatum primi hominis originaliter transit in posteros . . . Sic igitur inordinatio quae est in isto homine ex Adam generato, non est voluntaria voluntate ipsius, sed voluntate primi parentis, qui movet *motione generationis* omnes qui ex eius origine derivantur” (*Ibid.*, q. 81. a. 1. c).

““sicut in subiecto, peccatum originale nullo modo potest esse in carne, sed solum in anima” (*Ibid.*, q. 83, a. 1, c).

““peccatum originale . . . [est] per vitiata[m] originem innatus” (*Ibid.*, q. 82, a. 1, ad 3um).

essence of the soul than its potencies, and among the latter it affects the will more than the other potencies/<sup>41</sup> thus constituting for each man a propensity to evil, a seat of disorder, a source of actual sin.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to detail St. Thomas' conception about original sin if we want to understand how the sin of idolatry is the fatal result to which the devil should lead man after he had once succeeded in detaching man from God. Now we can give a better account of the ease with which the devil leads the most natural, as well as the most spiritual, instinct in man to fall to the level of the senses. After the fall, man was a prey to a vagrant and unbridled sensibility; his intellect was darkened and weakened; his will inclined to evil, with a propensity to seek itself in everything.<sup>43</sup> The devil would be very successful in deceiving human souls by inciting them to seek the absolute, which they still needed, in the senses—whither concupiscence would lead them.<sup>44</sup>

Fundamentally the devil attempts to satisfy that *disordered love of self* in which man lives.<sup>45</sup> The cult formerly given the

141 "anima secundum essentiam est *primum* subiectum originalis peccati" (*Ibid.*, q. 83, a. 2, c). \* Dicendum quod in infectione peccati originalis duo est considerare. Primo quidem inhaerentium eius ad subiectum, et secundum hoc primo respici essentiam animae . . . Deinde oportet considerare inclinationem eius ad actum, et hoc modo respicit potentias animae. Oportet ergo quod illam per prius respiciat. quae primam inclinationem habet ad peccandum. Haec autem est voluntas " (*Ibid.*, a. 3, c).

142 "etiam ex peccato originali [sequitur] aliqua inclinatio in actum inordinatum, non directe, sed indirecte, scilicet per remotionem prohibentis, idest originalis iustitiae" (*Ibid.*, q. 82, a. 1. ad Sum).

143 "Dicendum quod per iustitiam originalem perfecte ratio continebat inferiores animae vires, et ipsa ratio a Deo perficiebatur ei subiecta. Haec autem originalis iustitia subtracta est per peccatum primi parentis . . . Et ideo omnes vires animae remanent quodammodo destitutae proprio ordine . . . Inquantum ergo ratio destituitur suo ordine ad verum, est vulnus ignorantiae; inquantum vero voluntas destituitur ordine ad bonum, est vulnus malitiae; inquantum vero irascibilis destituitur suo ordine ad arduum, est vulnus infirmitatis; inquantum vero concupiscentia destituitur ordine ad delectabile moderatum ratione, est vulnus concupiscentiae" (*Ibid.*, q. 85, a. 3, c).

144 "Dicendum quod illi qui peccant, avertuntur ab eo in quo vere invenitur ratio ultimi finis, non autem ab ipsa ultimi finis intentione, quam quaerunt falso in aliis rebus" (*Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 7. ad lum).

145 "[Sapiens] loquitur de superbia secundum quod est inordinatus appetitus propriae excellentiae . . . In . . . ordine [intentionis] habet [superbia] rationem

true *God*, Whose transcendence can never satisfy insatiable appetites, is realigned to realities better suited to the sensitive appetite, *which is finally convinced of* their divinity. Fallen man is satisfied *with this, but the reverence and the submission which he manifests to his new gods are only imaginary fears entirely out of proportion to the excellence and dignity of* these realities. *Such reverence and submission constitute enslavement and servitude* which bring only ridiculous benefits.

Now we have to consider what modifications the reverence of the *idolater undergoes*. We have said that when reverence is perverted, it degenerates into imaginary fear. Let us go to St. Thomas for a more detailed analysis.

With regard to idolatry, St. Thomas has pointed out that we turn away from the true God and give the cult which we previously reserved to God to sensually attractive realities of the created order:

The first species of superstition is idolatry, which *unduly offers* divine reverence to *creatures*.<sup>140</sup>

We must make an explicit account of the alterations which reverence undergoes when it falls to the level of the senses. We shall be interested, then, in studying what St. Thomas has said with regard to worldly or human fear. There we shall find a number of relations to be established; too, we shall be able to identify under this name what our reverence becomes in idolatry.

By worldly or human fear, St. Thomas means the fear which turns us from God:

Since the object of fear is evil, sometimes man recedes from God because of the evils which he fears: this fear is called human or worldly.<sup>147</sup>

Here we have the *same effect* as in idolatry: man is turned

principii et finis . . . Fines autem in omnibus bonis temporalibus acquirendis est ut homo per illa quondam perfectionem singularem et excellentiam habeat. Et ideo ex hac parte superbia, quae est appetitus excellentiae, ponitur initium omnis peccati (*Ibid.*, q. 84, a. 2, c).

*ue Ibid.*, II-II, q. 92, a. 2, c.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 19, a. 2, c.

away from God. We have, too, the *same motives*, and shall see later. Let us follow St. Thomas in distinguishing between the evil which is feared and the reality from which this evil can come:

The evil from which one flees is *contrary to a corporal or temporal good which one loves inordinately*; . . . and he flees from suffering *at the hands of some temporal man*.<sup>[\*9]</sup>

Both of these are created realities. It must be noted, too, that both of them have a relation with *disordered love*, which can result only from a disordered love of self. St. Thomas is more explicit on this point in the *Summa*:

And in this way worldly love is properly called that love by which someone turns to the world *as to his end*. Now fear arises from love, for man fears to lose what he loves. And thus worldly fear is that fear which proceeds from worldly love *as from an evil root*.<sup>[\*9]</sup>

We can analyze the whole psychology of idolatry under the expression “worldly or human fear.” Although this expression seems deceptive at first, we must remember that St. Thomas takes it from the Fathers. If we want to understand the expression which St. Thomas uses out of respect for tradition, it seems that we are authorized to conclude that the word “world” is used in this context to designate *all created reality*. As soon as any creature takes on the value of an end for us, and is substituted for God, we are smitten with love for the world—a disordered love which can only engender the unreasonable fear of losing this creature. We were inspired with reverence because of the fear of being separated from God. Reverence kept us “collected within our own smallness.” We feared to dare to make ourselves His equals. In idolatry our reverence remains a fear, even a “fear of separation,” but this is the fear of being separated from the sensible realities which our imagination, under the devil’s insinuations, represents to us as divine. *This separation now seems to us*



to be the greatest evil. Consequently, our reverence remains, too, a "fear of adequation": we fear lest we should make ourselves the equals of these realities. Moreover, we are inclined to manifest our slavery to them by signs of deference—in exaggerated cases.

Certainly these are unreasonable fears, since they have to do with an evil which is not definitive for us: the separation from, the deprivation of a sensible good, of the sensible joys which we experience in the cult of false gods. They are unreasonable, too, because they are aroused by realities from which no really serious evil can come to us. Finally they are unreasonable because they result from a disordered love of self, which makes us seek our wellbeing and end wherever our concupiscence can be satisfied, and makes us turn from God whenever His demands come into conflict with the false pleasures which we taste and which we fear to lose at any price.

The result of idolatry is that reverence, perhaps the truest attitude for men in God's presence (because it is the consciousness of our state as creatures), degenerates *into evil passion*. This passion is false in its origin and development, even though it preserves the depth and vitality of a natural instinct. "*Corruptio optimi, pessima.*"

Now we have to recall what has just been said about original sin. From this we can see that in such a state of disorder our relations with God would deviate and finally be broken—unless they were rectified. In man's state of impotency to turn again to his true end, God alone could renew relations with him.<sup>150</sup> This is entirely gratuitous on His part, a case of merciful condescension,<sup>151</sup> no longer depending upon man.

This again is a matter of faith. God has revealed man's redemption. Therefore, it is not a matter for research or

<sup>150</sup>"quod homo convertatur ad Deum, hoc non potest esse nisi Deo ipsum convertente" (*Ibid.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 6, c).

<sup>151</sup>"Donum . . . gratiae excedit omnem facultatem naturae creatae; cum nihil aliud sit quam quaedam participatio divinae naturae, quae excedit omnem aliam naturam . . . Sic enim necesse est quod solus Deus deificet, communicando consortium divinae naturae per quamdam similitudinis participationem" (*Ibid.*, q. 112, a. 1, c).

demonstration. We can only penetrate as well as we can into the meaning of the words of salvation which have been spoken for us.

In trying to construct the theological context in which St. Thomas' religious vocabulary should be interpreted, we mentioned the principal facts which command the theology on the redemption. Humanity was brought back by Jesus Christ, God's own Son. It is our task now to determine in what way our relations with God have been renewed and profoundly transformed since Christ suffered and died for us. To do this we must determine what our redemption by Christ entailed. This redemption was not only a work of justice and satisfaction for sin, but also a work of superabundant mercy. \* Therefore, as St. Thomas remarks,<sup>153</sup> Christ not only liberated us from sin, the slavery to the devil, and the penalties due to sin, thereby reconciling us with God;<sup>154</sup> He also opened up to us the gates of heaven, and made us sharers in His glory.<sup>155</sup> By His Passion He merited salvation for us. In this light, we must see that Christ first healed us from sin and the disorders which flowed from it, and then raised us up to His own glory.<sup>156</sup> St. Paul says that He is "the firstborn amongst many brethren." From that time on, relations with God were established again, this time on the level of friendship.<sup>157</sup>

In the light of these notations, we can now undertake to demonstrate the successive and gradual transformations which

<sup>154</sup> "Dicendum quod hominem liberari per passionem Christi, conveniens fuit et misericordiae et iustitiae eius . . . Et hoc fuit abundantioris misericordiae quam si peccata absque satisfactione dimisset" (*Ibid.*, III. q. 46. a. 1, ad Sum).

<sup>153</sup> "Quia [Christus] est caput nostrum, per passionem suam . . . liberavit nos . . . a peccatis" (*Ibid.*, q. 49, a. 1. c).

<sup>154</sup> "per [crucis passionem] . . . diabolus est a potestate hominum eiectus ~ (*Ibid.* a. 2, *sed contra*). "Dicendum quod per passionem Christi liberati sumus a reatu poenae" (*Ibid.*, a. 3. c). "Dicendum quod passio Christi est causa reconciliationis nostrae ad Deum" (*Ibid.*, a. 4, c).

<sup>155</sup> "per passionem Christi aperta est nobis ianua regni caelestis" (*Ibid.*, a. 5. c) lie "Sunt . . . quinque effectus gratiae in nobis: quorum primus est ut anima sanetur; secundus ut bonum velit; tertius est ut bonum quod vult, efficaciter operetur; quartus est ut in bono perseveret; quintus est ut ad gloriam perveniatw (*Ibid.*, MI, q. 111, a. 3, c).

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 110, a. 1, c.

the relations with *God undergo* in the case of one who passes from the state of idolatry to the state of grace. We choose this case as the one which will exhaust the possibilities of rectification and intensification in the progressive development of *relations with God*.

*The person who succumbs to the devil and commits the sin of idolatry has turned away from God through fear of losing the sensible realities which he has made gods in relation to himself. In this pitiful state a man enslaves himself to beings which are lower than he is. Yet his state is not desperate. Christ has come upon earth. God can condescend to his misery and, in a gesture of unheard-of mercy, renew contact with him if he does not place an obstacle to this merciful gesture.*<sup>158</sup>

The initiative belongs to God. He alone can move us to conversion by that special impetus which is actual *operating* grace.<sup>159</sup> From this point on, man is invited to *cooperate* in God's action. The first act which he has to perform is an act of faith in God, Who justifies men by Christ's mysteries.<sup>160</sup> The act which follows on man's part is a *movement of servile fear* which draws us from sin through fear of being punished by God. Then comes an act of hope which inclines us to make amendment, in hope of obtaining pardon from God. Following upon this is the act of charity which makes us hate sin as sin—no longer as the cause of punishment. Finally, St. Thomas tells us, there appears in the soul a *movement of filial fear* flowing from a full heart which leads us to offer God satisfaction because of the reverence due God. Let us carefully take note of this last motive: "because of reverence for God." <sup>161</sup>

<sup>158</sup> "defectus gratiae prima causa est ex nobis, sed collationis gratiae prima causa est a Deo" (*Ibid.*, q. 112, a. 3, ad 2um).

<sup>160</sup> "liberum arbitrium ad Deum converti non potest nisi Deo ipsum ad se convertente" (*Ibid.*, q. 109, a. 6, ad 1um). "homo ad recte vivendum dupliciter auxilio Dei indiget. Uno quidem modo, quantum ad aliquod habituale donum . . . Alio modo indiget homo auxilio gratiae ut a Deo moveatur ad agendum . . . [i. e.] ad recte agendum" (*Ibid.*, a. 9, c).

<sup>161</sup> "in iustificatione impii requiritur actus fidei quantum ad hoc quod homo credat Deum esse iustificatorem hominum per mysterium Christi" (*Ibid.*, q. 118, a. 4, ad 3um).

*lei Ibid.*, III, q. 85, a. 5, c.

In this psychological description we find the four *required*, according to the Council of Trent, for man's sufficient disposition to sanctifying grace from God, that is, to justification: acts of faith, hope, charity, and penance?" However, as St. Thomas warns us, it is important not to conceive the justification of the sinner after the manner of physical motion. Here everything is done in an instant: K; the motion of free will to God, the movement away from sin, the remission of the sin, and the infusion of grace? 4 These are indispensable distinctions for the true understanding of how the soul in the state of idolatry, where reverence for God was turned into unnatural fear (which we have identified with what St. Thomas calls "worldly fear"), gradually experiences for God, under the action of grace, first a servile fear, then a filial fear which St. Thomas himself associates with reverence. The foregoing explanation permits us to pursue again our inquiry into what St. Thomas means by servile fear.

As we have said before, grace first heals, then elevates. Hence, first there is the gradual rectifying of each of our faculties by God's grace, and our cooperation until the moment when God completes the healing of the soul by the infusion of habitual grace. In this very infusion God brings about the ultimate disposition in the soul for receiving this grace? We

u\* "Disponuntur autem adulti ad ipsam iustitiam, dum excitati divina gratia et adiuti, *fidem ex auditu* concipientes . . . et dum, peccatores se esse intelligentes, a divinae iustitiae timore, quo utiliter concutiuntur, ad considerandam Dei misericordiam se convertendo, in *spem* eriguntur, fidentes. Deum sibi propter Christum propitium fore, illumque tanquam omnis iustitiae fontem *diligere* incipiunt ac propterea moventur adversus peccata per odium aliquod et detestationem, hoc est. per *cam poenitentiam*, quam ante baptismum agi oportet; denique dum proponunt suscipere baptismum, inchoare novam vitam et servare divina mandata" (H. Denziger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* [Fribourg: 1987], n. 79S). "Si quis dixerit, sine praeveniente Spiritus Sancti inspiratione atque eius adiutorio hominem credere sperare et diligere aut poenitere posse, sicut oportet, ut ei iustificationis gratia conferatur: A. S." (*Ibid.*, n. S13).

[4] "Gratiae . . . infusio fit in instanti absque successione" (*Summa Theologiae* I-II. q. 118, a. 7, c).

[4] "quatuor enumerantur quae requiruntur ad justificationem impii. scilicet gratiae infusio; motus liberi arbitrii in Deum per fidem; et motus liberi arbitrii in peccatum; et remissio culpaе" (*Ibid.*, a. 6, c).

[4] "Dicendum quod agens infinitae virtutis non exigit materiam, vel dispositionem materiae, quasi praesuppositam ex alterius causae actione. Sed tamen oportet quod.

must investigate further the extent to which infection of the soul with regard to original sin remains. Let us try to determine what rectification servile fear brings to our relations with God. Before studying the nature of this fear, let us note that it is the third act which man is inclined to place, that this act is inspired by the faith which the soul experiences concerning God and His mercy, and that, in its turn, this servile fear causes an act of penance and regret with regard to the sins which have separated the soul from God.

Since this fear is inspired by faith and can provoke acts of penance in the soul, it is manifestly distinct from worldly fear. The latter separates us from God, while servile fear makes us draw closer to Him:

Worldly or human fear has to do with the penalty *turning man from God*, while servile fear has to do with the penalty *drawing man to Him*.<sup>17</sup>

To understand the nature of this fear, let us seek the object and causes which St. Thomas assigns to it. As in the case of worldly fear, one can distinguish two objects: the evil itself which is feared, and the reality whence this evil can come to us. The *evil which is feared* is the punishment for our sins:

If, therefore, anyone is converted to God and inheres in Him *because of the fear of punishment*, there will be servile fear.<sup>107</sup>

Then, as in the case of every fear inspired *by God*, it is the consideration of His justice which makes servile fear arise:

Fear arises in us according to the consideration of His justice.<sup>108</sup>

Therefore servile fear has the property of making us fear the punishments which will come from God because of our sins.

St. Thomas adds that such a fear comes to us from the Holy Spirit:

secundum conditionem rei causandae, in ipsa re causet et materiam et dispositionem debitam ad formam. Et similiter ad hoc quod Deus gratiam infundat animae, nulla praeparatio exigitur quam ipse non faciat" (*Ibid.*, q. 112, a. 2, ad 3um).

IMI, q. 19, a. 2, ad 4um.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, in c.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 1, ad 2um & Sum.

Servile fear is not to be enumerated among the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, although it comes *from the Holy Spirit*.<sup>10</sup>

The Holy Spirit is in charge of our sanctification. It is He Who, without us, takes the initiative to convert us. It is under His motion that we make an act of faith in the mystery of our redemption by Christ. Through this act of faith He reveals to us the gravity of our fault and the punishments which await us. Under His motion, we conceive the fear of being punished by God. Thanks to Him, we place the second act which makes us approach God. However, as yet the Holy Spirit does not act without resistance. This fear proceeds also from another principle which remains in the soul and vitiates the good movements which God inspires in us, that is, the love of self:

Servile fear is caused *by love of self*, because it is the fear of the punishment which is a detriment to one's own good.<sup>11</sup>

The idolater who turns away from God because of love of self now approaches Him for the same reason. What one fears above all is punishment, because what one still loves above all is oneself. In this light we can see that this fear, although felt under the action of the Holy Spirit, coexists with a state of sin, with a disordered love of self:

Insofar as someone flees from punishment which is contrary to one's own natural good *as the principal evil* contrary to the good which is loved as an end. . . . That fear of punishment is not said to be servile except when it is feared as a principal evil. And thus fear as servile *does not remain with charity*.<sup>12</sup>

Like "worldly" fear, servile fear has to do with punishments, since it proceeds from a disordered love of self: and yet it is clearly distinct. "Worldly" fear, by inspiring us with the fear of evils which could come from created realities, had turned us away from the true God; the second (servile fear turns us away from creatures through fear of punishment, it is

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 9, c.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 6, c.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

true, but the evils concerned can come from God. In this way it is an inverse movement. Now we can understand the influence of this movement on our relations with God.

The precise role of servile fear in the work of just ideation is to separate us from sin and make us regret sin. Thus it disposes *lia'* sold for the reception of grace as from the outside:

Servile fear is as the principle which *exteriorly disposes* one to wisdom, insofar as someone *leaven sin* because of the fear of punishment and is thereby habilitated to the ('fleet of wisdom.')

Even more precisely, servile fear inspires us first with the fear of sin, then with the resolution to amend, and finally with the hope that through the amendment we shall be pardoned:

The third act is the motion of servile fear, by which one *is drawn away from sins* through fear of punishment. The fourth act is the *movement of hope*, by which one makes a *purpose of amendment* under the hope of gaining pardon.<sup>171</sup>

From these texts we can conclude that St. Thomas conceives servile fear as a movement of the soul which removes the obstacles opposing the renewal of our relations with God on our part. This time the will has regained control. It is not as yet rectified relative to God, since it still entertains a disordered love of self; but it has turned away from creatures, and now fears God. It is the will which experiences this fear. The will alone can fear God. But the disorder still remains in the soul of the idolater. One would seek in vain for the moment when these sentiments of reverence and submission to God, which the soul has felt in the recognition of its sin, appear. Reverence proceeds from love of God. Moreover, it is an annihilation of our being in the presence of God's majesty. Servile fear, on the contrary, is entirely preoccupied with self and with one's own good. Properly speaking, it is a fear of God.

Another is the fear which flees from the evil which is contrary to a created nature, that is, the *fear of pain*, and yet it flees from this *because of a spiritual cause*, namely, God. This fear is praise-

\*<sup>171</sup>*Ibid.*, a. 7, c.

*Ibid.*, III, q. 85, a. fl, c.

worthy; it has in of itself a fear of God from the Holy Spirit. But insofar as such a fear does not flow from an evil which is opposed to spiritual good namely -in but only through the Holy Spirit, but from man's fault, it is not proper to say that he does good through fear of this kind, he does not do it well, because he (does not do it of his own accord, but under the coercion of the fear of punishment. This type of action is proper to slaves.<sup>1</sup>

We have determined the stages according to which our relations with God are taken up again with God, thanks to His infinite mercy. These relations ceased temporarily with man only that they might be taken up again with greater intensity, according to God's own plans. We could doubt about this, especially with regard to our reverence for God, for the fact of His Incarnation seems to have effaced the infinite distance which separated Him from His creature. St. Thomas holds another opinion. The reason he gives should help us orientate, according to their true meaning, the researches we must undertake in order to analyze very clearly the factors and nature of the new relations which God urges each of the souls He justifies to entertain in regard to Him. This is, in effect, why St. Thomas concludes that the Incarnation has contributed only to augment our reverence for God:

God did not diminish His majesty by taking on flesh; this is the reason for reverence for Him is not diminished; this reverence is increased through the increase of knowledge about Him. From the very fact that He wished to come to us through the assumption of flesh He has attracted us more to knowing Him.<sup>2</sup>

Once again we find the argument upon which we have insisted in the course of this study: our relations with God are proportionate to what we know about Him.

What new relations of knowledge does justification grant us, so that our relations with God are radically transformed?<sup>3</sup> To see this point clearly we must briefly recall the profound

<sup>1</sup> \*Ad Rm 8, c. 8, led. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Summa Theol., III, q. 1, a. 1. ad 3um.



changes which sanctifying grace accomplishes in us. We have already noted how this grace heals and rectifies our corrupted nature. We must now find out what super-elevation it realizes in our being. St. Thomas insists that it heals and raises our nature.<sup>176</sup> Grace raises us insofar as it makes us share in God's own nature.<sup>177</sup> This is a participation by similitude, St. Thomas adds <sup>178</sup>—one which transforms our being. Once we are justified by God, we possess a supernatural being which is proportioned to the exercise of supernatural operations.<sup>179</sup> This is *so true* that at the end of his treatise on grace, St. Thomas in admiration confesses that the justification of one man is a work higher than the creation of heaven and earth.<sup>180</sup> Justification places the soul in immediate union with its ultimate end.<sup>181</sup> Through creation, man shared in God's being; now man is, through participation, like God in nature. God's intimacy with him is that which one reserves for his friends, those whom one calls to share his life.

It will be useful to recall, too, what we indicated at the beginning of this study, namely, that if sanctifying grace makes us capable of supernatural operations, it can do this by giving us new principles of operation. Some give us the capacity to

176\**homo ad recte vivendum dupliciter auxilio Dei indiget. Uno quidem modo, quantum ad aliquod habituale donum, per quod natura humana corrupta sanetur, et etiam sanata elevetur ad operanda opera meritoria vitae aeternae* " (*Ibid.*, I-II. q. 109. a. 9. c).

177\**gratia dicitur creari, ex eo quod homines secundum ipsam creantur, idest in novo esse constituuntur* " (*Ibid.*, q. 110, a. 2, ad Sum).

178\**necesse est quod solus Deus deificet, communicando consortium divinae naturae per quamdam similitudinis participationem* " (*Ibid.*, q. 112, a. 1, c).

179\**gratia dupliciter potest intelligi: uno modo, divinum auxilium quo nos movet ad bene volendum et agendum; alio modo, habituale donum nobis divinitus inditum . . . Si . . . accipiat gratia pro habituali dono, sic est duplex gratiae effectus, sicut et cuiuslibet alterius formae: quorum primus est esse, secundus est operatio* " (*Ibid.*, q. III, a. 2, c).

180\**Dicendum quod opus aliquod potest dici magnum dupliciter. Uno modo, ex parte modi agendi. Et sic maximum est opus creationis, in quo ex nihilo fit aliquid. Alio modo potest dici opus magnum propter magnitudinem eius quod fit. Et secundum hoc, maius opus est justificatio impii, quae terminatur ad bonum aeternum divinae participationis, quam creatio caeli et terrae, quae terminatur ad bonum naturae mutabilis* " (*Ibid.*, q. 113, a. 9, c).

181\**Gratia . . . gratum faciens ordinat hominem immediate ad coniunctionem ultimi finis* " (*Ibid.*, q. 111, a. 5, c).

think supranaturally, to think as God's adopted sons otherwise make it possible for us to love supernaturally. Since grace performs the function of nature, "*ad modum naturae*," the theological virtues which are infused with grace serve as potencies, "*ad modum potentiae*." The infused moral virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit fulfil the role of habits in the supernatural organism, "*ad modum habitus*." The justified soul is thus equipped to act on the supernatural level with principles which are analogous to those required for living a strictly human life fully. This parallelism reveals God's providential designs; St. Thomas has formulated it in an aphorism which has become famous: "Grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it."<sup>1</sup>\*<sup>2</sup> That is so true that grace, the supernatural virtues, and the gifts have as their subjects the very parts of the soul which they perfect. Grace inheres in the very essence of the soul; the virtues and gifts have one or other of the soul's faculties as the proper subject.<sup>1</sup> Having made these notations, we are now prepared to determine what new data become available with the grace of justification.

Ever since original sin, reason has remained confused concerning the true God. Once reason had demonstrated His existence, it had to admit its incapability to penetrate into His nature. However, reason could determine what He is not and what He is in relation to us. But to be justified, the soul must, in union with God, make an act of faith in the mystery of our redemption by Jesus Christ. The soul must implicitly believe in everything which God has revealed concerning His intimate life and His free and merciful initiatives in regard to man. At the moment of its justification, the soul receives the virtue of faith along with the other virtues. Faith enables the soul to adhere to what the Church proposes as authentically revealed by God.

The God which reason has presented to us as transcendent (because of His quality of being first cause), faith reveals to be three and one, our Creator, our Providence, and especially

1,1 *Ibid.*, q. 50, a. 2, c.

*Ibid.*, q. 110, 8, c. & a. 4, ad Sum

our Redeemer and Sanctifier. Faith reveals His sentiments of infinite mercy and love for man, and His plan to make men share in the intimacy of His divine life. Insofar as faith reveals *Gods new* communications with His creature (the sharing in *His life and the basis of our* friendship with God), thereby bringing to human life a more perfect immanence, to the same extent we discover our incapacity to encompass God. We become more and more conscious of our disproportion to God, and of our nothingness in relation to Him.<sup>184</sup> Moreover, *faith adheres* properly not to purely speculative truths, but to vital truths, to the revelations of a personal being who is our sovereign Good and our proper End:

Faith is the *cause of* filial fear, by which one fears to be separated from God, or by which one flees from comparing himself with God by *showing reverence for Him*. And this insofar as through faith we have this estimation about God, namely, that He is *a certain immense and highest Good*, and that to be separated from It is *worst*, to wish to be equal to It is *evil*.<sup>185</sup>

Therefore, in the light of faith, our reverence for God increases, for our souls know with greater certainty than ever that there could be no greater calamity than to wish to become God's equal or be separated from Him.

We have limited the new element of knowledge which can intensify our reverence for God. Now, since reverence always remains fear, we must disengage the transformations which the supernatural love of God causes in reverence. It is important to show, first, *how reverence reappears in the soul* at the moment of its justification.

As we have noted before, St. Thomas teaches us that at the moment of justification, two movements proceeding from each other arise in the soul: first a movement of charity, then a movement of fear which he explicitly calls reverence.<sup>180</sup> This is not surprising. For St. Thomas, in the supernatural order reverence is properly identified with a fear which he calls

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 11, c.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 7, a. 1, c.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, III, q. 85, a. 5, c.

*initial*, or *filial*, or *chaste*, or even *reverential fear*. 'We shall see in an instant what nuances these different names contain.'

Reverence is properly initial and chaste fear, '1 Filial fear has two acts, namely, to have reverence for God and to fear separation/

St. Thomas establishes a distinction between initial and filial fears. Since they are essentially the same, they differ only as the imperfect differs from the perfect:

Initial fear and filial fear differ not essentially, but according to state, that is, as *imperfect to perfect*.<sup>189</sup>

For St. Thomas, filial fear, chaste fear, and reverential fear are equivalent. In relation to initial fear, these denote a state of full development. Initial fear corresponds to and proceeds from imperfect charity; filial fear has the same relation to perfect charity. According to St. Thomas, our reverence consists rather in an initial fear at the beginning of conversion. Here is his detailed account of why this is so:

There is a fear which flees from the evil opposed to spiritual good, that is, sins or *separation from God*, which one fears he will incur by a just punishment on God's part. Thus, in the case of both objects, this fear has to do with a spiritual thing, and has an eye for punishment. This fear is said to be *initial* because it is usually in men at the beginning of their conversion, for they fear punishment because of what they have done in the past, and they fear to be separated from God through sin—and this because of the infused grace of charity.<sup>190</sup>

This text furnishes all the distinctions desired. Moreover, it is important for us to note how initial fear is related to servile fear, and how the former is distinct from the latter. Both are fears about punishments which divine justice could inflict upon us for sins; but while servile fear, even in making us approach God, proceeds from a disordered love of self, initial fear presupposes that we are already adhering to God. Love of self is

<sup>189</sup> *Super Psalms*, c. 34, ff., vers. 17.

<sup>190</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 67, a. 4, ad Sum.

"*Ibid.*, II-II, q. 10, a. 8, c.

*Ad Romanos*, c. 5, lect. 3.

still present, but this is a love of self subordinated to love of God. We fear sin lest we should be punished.<sup>191</sup> In this light, at the beginning of our conversion the basic fear is lest we *should be* separated from the love of God and offend Him through sin. However, both fears spring from the fear of being punished. Charity is present, but in a very imperfect manner:

Initial fear is to be understood as that belonging /o *the state of beginners*, in whom a certain filial fear starts to exist *through the beginning of charity*.<sup>192</sup>

We have seen that initial fear proceeds from charity. To understand just how this happens we must recall how the natural feeling of reverence is related to our natural love for God. Inasmuch as God is the beginning and therefore the Father of every creature, we show reverence for and submission to Him, as the first expressions of our love of Him. These are natural and spontaneous attitudes which **appear** in the soul of every man as soon as he realizes his total dependence upon God: he is seized with the fear of daring to make himself God's equal and of being separated from Him.

However, strictly speaking, from the time of original sin, man left to his natural faculties has been **incapable** of loving God even through natural love, that is, of loving Him above all other things (as their principle and end),<sup>193</sup> Without grace man is unable to have true reverence for God. With the help of grace, in the light afforded by faith, man was called to find his true beatitude in God, to share God's own life.<sup>194</sup> God is

<sup>191</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 8, ad lum.

<sup>1,2</sup> *Ibid.*, in c.

“... homo in statu naturae integrae dilectionem sui ipsius **referebat** ad amorem Dei sicut ad finem . . . Sed in statu naturae corruptae homo ab hoc (idest a dilectione Dei quae erat sicut finis dilectionis sui ipsius et super omnia] deficit secundum appetitum voluntatis rationalis, quae propter corruptionem naturae sequitur bonum privatum, nisi sanetur per gratiam Dei. Et ideo . . . in statu naturae corruptae indiget homo etiam ad hoc [scilicet ad diligendum Deum *naturaliter super omnia*] auxilio gratiae naturam sanantis” (*Ibid.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 8, c).

Natura . . . diligit Deum super omnia, prout esi. *principium* et *finis* naturalis boni; caritas autem secundum quod est *obiectum beatitudinis*, et secundum quod homo habet quandam *societatem spirituales* cum Deo” (*Ibid.*, ad lum).

no longer man's Father simply because He has given him 'life' and conserved him in being. God also has a right to this title because He has made man His adopted son by calling him to a share in the inheritance and glory of His Son by nature. As St. Thomas explains, God, in calling man to share eternally in His divine life, manifested a special love for man, that love, special in relation to the general love which God has for every creature. As a result, our relations with God now have the relations of God's own Son with Himself as their model and exemplar:

Through the love of charity God becomes *our Father*, as we learn in the Epistle to the Romans, VIII, 15: "you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)."<sup>1</sup>

It is easy to see that the revelation of being the object of such a love on God's part can only intensify our fear of being separated from Him. This happens even though at the beginning of our conversion the fear of the punishments which this separation would merit for us still remains. At the same time, the revelation of such a love can only intensify our reverence for and submission to God by throwing new light upon God's unheard-of beneficence and the infinite excellence of His Being. As St. Thomas noted above, man then realizes God's majesty and goodness so much that he judges that:

to wish *to be separated* from Him is worst, and to wish *to equal oneself* to Him is evil.<sup>1</sup>

This is an intensification which is a super-elevation of the natural movements of the soul. Reverence which in the natural order was a spontaneous sentiment of man's nature is raised to the level of a gift in the supernatural order. God infuses it with grace, after the manner of an habitual and permanent disposition which serves the demands of our charity. For St. Thomas, reverential fear is inspired by the Holy Spirit. It constitutes the gift of fear in us:

<sup>1M</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 2, ad Sum.

<sup>1,4</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 7, a. 1, c.

The fear of God which is enumerated among the seven gifts is filial or chaste fear.<sup>197</sup>

We know already that initial fear and filial fear are essentially the same. Let us add that for St. Thomas reverence is properly the act of the gift of fear:

To have reverence for God is an act of the gift of fear.<sup>198</sup>

The gift of fear sounds out great excellence inasmuch as it implies reverence for God.<sup>199</sup>

Filial fear has two acts, namely, to have reverence for God and to fear separation.<sup>200</sup>

Inspired by the Holy Spirit Himself, proceeding from the light of our faith and from the fervor of our nascent charity, our reverence for God dictates the attitudes required in our new relations with God. To understand what St. Thomas has to say on this matter, it is important to recall how we have related reverence with filial fear if we are to transpose this to the supernatural level. St. Thomas has told us that we could not respond to God's benefits through love without first having placed diverse acts of justice towards Him. These acts are demanded by the very inequality between ourselves as creatures and Him as Creator. By making us share in the divine nature grace removes the infinite distance which separated us from Him. In fact we know that although our relations with God have become more intimate through redemption, by associating us with the mystery of His life, they have only made us penetrate further into His infinite transcendence and inaccessibility. The more we succeed in knowing Him, the more we are convinced of the fundamental incapacity of every creature to encompass God completely. Whatever the enrichments of His mercy, there will always exist between God and ourselves the abyss between the one who is by essence and everything which is by participation. We remain creatures in every order and on every level.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 19, a. 9, c.

<sup>199</sup> *766Z.*, q. 81, a. 2, ad 1um.

<sup>198</sup> *III Sent.*, c. XXXIV, q. 1, a. 2, ad 7um.

<sup>200</sup> *Summa Theol.*, I-II, q. 67, a. 4, ad 2uni.

In this light one can understand that from the very beginning charity is expressed and translated into an instinctive movement of recoil and retreat. Reverence is purely and simply fear. Moreover, upon the fear of making ourselves God's equals, and thus of being separated from Him, there follows and appears as due a protestation of our submission. The first act, prerequisite to the love to which God urges His adoptive sons to respond, is to submit oneself to Him. St. Thomas explains this very clearly:

The relation of the slave to his master is through the power of the master, who subjects the slave to himself; but the relation of the son to the father is, on the contrary, *through the affection of the son, who subjects himself to his father.* . . .<sup>201</sup>

The Angelic Doctor adds that to explicitate and translate the profound sentiments with which God's majesty and singular excellence inspire us in its diverse manifestations belongs to the infused virtue of religion:

To do certain things divine reverence pertains to religion.<sup>202</sup>

To have reverence, as such, is an act of the gift of fear, but to show reverence, as *something due to God*, pertains properly to religion.<sup>203</sup>

Many things in these texts are worthy of note. Religion is a moral virtue, a potential part of justice, clearly distinct from the reverence which inspires and animates it. Its role is to order the interior and exterior acts which are most proper for the manifestation of our reverence for God according to His due. Thus, for St. Thomas, reverence is truly the source which gives the true life to our religion:

There is a *first motive* for honoring, that is, insofar as one honors another *from the reverence* which he has for him.<sup>204</sup>

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 2, ad Sum.

*Ibid.*, q. 81, a. 2, ad lum.

<sup>203</sup> *III Sent.*, d. IX, q. 1, a. 1, sol. 1, ad Sum.

<sup>204</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 108, a. 1, ad lum.



Filial fear is as a *certain principle* of all those things which are observed in reverence for God.<sup>200</sup>

Reverence is both the principle of religion and its *crown and end*. In this light, an act of religion consists in trying to extend the respect for God which should always accompany the realization of His infinite perfection:

All exterior cult to God is *especially* ordained that man may hold God in reverence.<sup>201</sup>

It is man's *end*, that is, insofar as someone is honored in order that he may be held in *reverence* by others.<sup>207</sup>

The act of the virtue of religion which most properly expresses our entire submission is undoubtedly the *act of devotion*. As the first and principal act of the virtue of religion, it is an application of the will to God's service and honor. In this way we show the homage of our whole being to God.<sup>209</sup> This act holds the soul in a state of fervor and promptness to accomplish everything which is due to God's honor.<sup>200</sup> One can imagine the extent to which our charity and reverence for God find their fulfillment in the exercise of the virtue of religion.

The reverence which we have for God becomes efficacious through the virtue of religion. Through this virtue we succeed in expressing to God our response to His excellence, and by it we assure Him of our total submission. However, as long as charity remains imperfect, the love of self still lives in us, always ready to vitiate even our purest sentiments. According to St. Thomas, reverence is a movement of recoil which gathers us into our own smallness. Thus St. Thomas attributes to reverence not only the function of inspiring us with the most deferential submission to God, but also of keeping us in

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 22, a. 2, c.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 102, a. 4, c.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 103, a. 1, al. lum.

<sup>208</sup> "devotio nihil aliud esse videtur quam voluntas quaedam prompte tradendi se ad ea quae pertinent ad Dei famulatum [servitium]" (*Ibid.*, q. 82, a. 1, c.).

<sup>202</sup> "devotio est quidam voluntatis actus ad hoc homo prompte se tradat ad divinum obsequium" (*Ibid.*, a. 8, c.).

our place before Hirn. From this we can see the very done connection of reverence with *humility*. This latter, a moral virtue insofar as it is a part of temperance, has the proper function of moderating and rectifying every unruly movement of pride, which is nothing other than an *immoderate desire for one's own excellence*.<sup>210</sup> St. Thomas goes so far as to say that humility proceeds from reverence for God:

Humility properly concerns the reverence by which man is subject to God.-11

Humility is caused by divine reverence.<sup>21</sup>

Here is the explanation which he gives for this statement:

Humility essentially consists *in the appetite*, insofar as one restrains the impetus of his mind, lest he should tend towards great things inordinately; but it has its rule in *1/c*, namely, that one may not judge himself to be greater than what he is. *The principle and the root of each* is the reverence which one has for God.<sup>nl</sup>

This explanation advances two ideas. The first is that humility proceeds from the same realization of neediness and creaturehood as that which had inspired us with the fear of daring to make ourselves God's equals. More immediately it proceeds from the very fear which incites us to moderate our every desire for sufficiency and for the declaration of our own excellence. By relating humility to reverence in this manner, St. Thomas only manifests in the case of one of its potential parts the dependence which he has declared in the first article in the treatise on the virtue of temperance in relation to the gift of fear.<sup>14</sup> In this light, it is from one inspiration, from one filial and reverential fear of God, that the twofold complementary movement of the soul proceeds, holding itself in effacement before God through humility, and applying itself fervently to serve Him through devotion.

*uolbid.*, III, q. 84, a. 2, c.

*au Ibid.*, II-II, q. 161, a. 3, c.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, a. 4, ad 1uni.

*Ibid.*, a. 6, c.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 141, a. 1, ad Sum.

*Full development of our relations with the divine*

With regard to this subject two questions arise: First, what happens to reverence for God in a soul which grows in charity? Second, does this reverence remain in the souls of the elect? At the same time we advance the problems of the possibility of a development in reverence, of the nature of this development, and of the factors which will most properly assure it.

We have just seen that the infusion of grace is accompanied by the rectification and intensification of our natural tendencies. However, the soul is not constituted in perfection simply by this fact. In St. Thomas' own words, "the healing which grace brings to the wounds incurred through original sin is only begun in the mind, and is not as yet consummated in the flesh."<sup>215</sup> Concupiscence remains in man in the state of grace.<sup>216</sup> As yet it is with difficulty that the intellect finds the good to be done; the will experiences languor in its attempts to pursue what is presented to it as its true good.<sup>217</sup> Charity is that of a beginner still preoccupied with self. As St. Thomas says, it "thinks" less of progressing in love for God than of avoiding sin and resisting the bad desires of the flesh.<sup>218</sup> Briefly such are the conditions and obstacles which prevent our reverence from developing. Now we have to see how these obstacles

*Ibid.*, I-II, q. 109, a. 10, ad Sum.

"•"[Damatio] debita peccato originali . . . aufertur per gratiam Iesu Christi, quamvis maneat concupiscentiae fomes" (*Ibid.*, q. 89, a. 5, ad Ium). Cf. also *ibid.*, ad 2um.

<sup>117</sup> "Quae [humana natura] licet per gratiam sanetur quantum ad mentem, remanet tamen in ea corruptio et infectio quantum ad carnem . . . Remanet etiam quaedam ignorantiae obscuritas in intellectu . . . Propter varios enim rerum eventus, et quia etiam nos ipsos non perfecte cognoscimus, non possumus ad plenum scire quid nobis expediat" (*Ibid.*, q. 109, a. 9, c).

<sup>218</sup> "primo . . . incumbit homini studium principale ad recedendum a peccato et resistendum concupiscentiis eius, quae in contrarium caritatis movent. Et hoc pertinet ad incipientes, in quibus caritas est nutrienda vel fovenda ne corrumpatur" (and this in contradistinction to the degrees of charity belonging to those who are advancing or perfect in charity. Cf. *ibid.*, II-II, q. 24, a. 9, c). "Primus . . . effectus caritatis est ut homo a peccato discedat; et ideo mens caritatem habentis in primis circa hoc maxime occupatur ut a peccatis praeteritis emundetur, et a futuris praecaveat; et quantum ad hunc affectum dicitur caritas incipiens" (*III Sent.*, q. d. XXIX, q. 1, a. 8, sol. 1).

can be eliminated one by one, as our relation of friendship with God is increased and intensified.

First, recall certain fundamental points of St. Thomas's theology which concern the increase of our spiritual life. They are indispensable to an understanding of texts in which he determines how our reverence can be developed here on earth. The first of these principles is that our spiritual life consists principally in the exercise of the theological virtues, which place us in immediate contact with God.<sup>218</sup> In this light, our spiritual life will be intensified according to the growth of charity, faith, and hope. The same can be said about that reverence which proceeds from faith and charity and is the perfection of hope.

The second principle—an extension and explicitation of the first—is that as the theological virtues increase, so the influence of the gifts, which at the beginning of conversion is felt only latently and intermittently, becomes more manifest and insistent.<sup>220</sup> This occurs because the gifts are connected in charity. They are ordained to charity as well as to the perfection of the other two **theological** virtues. On the contrary, the infused moral virtues are ordered to the gifts which perfect them. When charity and faith increase, the gift of fear has a greater influence in the spiritual life. At the same time the gift makes the infused moral virtues which it perfects increase. St. Thomas explains in detail how these different factors influence one another and contribute to the full development of reverence for God.

If our fear of God endures and increases with growth in charity, this fear must be transformed. At the beginning of conversion to God, this fear is still mixed with the preoccupation about one's own good. That is why something of the servile remains—fear which the soul experiences before its conversion, that is, the fear of punishment from God. However,

<sup>218</sup> "Caritas . . . est quae unit nos Deo, qui est ultimus finis humanae mentis . . . Et ideo secundum caritatem specialiter attenditur perfectio christianae vitae" (*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 1st. a. 1, c.).

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, I-II, q. 60, a. 2, c.; and q. 68, a. 5, c.

as love for God intensifies, its imperfections disappear gradually. The first of these is the fear of punishment—and that for two motives:

The fear of punishment is diminished as charity increases, especially with regard to the act, for the more one loves God, the less one fears punishment: first, because *one is less attentive about one's own good*, to which pain is contrary; second, because *as one inheres more firmly one is more confident about one's reioard*, and, as a result, one has less fear about punishment.<sup>221</sup>

By centering our attention upon God, charity eliminates all egoism and makes us seek our wellbeing only from God. Moreover, all the remnants of presumption disappear along with the fear of punishment:

The fear of punishment is what diminishes *as hope increases*.<sup>221</sup> In repressing *the presumption of hope*, the principal reason is taken from *divine reverence*, by which it happens that man attributes to himself nothing other than what belongs to him according to the grade which he has obtained from God.<sup>223</sup>

However, when hope increases, *filial fear* increases; for to the extent that one more certainly looks for the possession of some good through another's help, one will fear to *offend* him or *be separated* from him.<sup>224</sup>

With the disappearance of presumption, hope and that filial fear which is its own perfection increase. According to St. Thomas, the gift of fear is principally ordered to the perfection of the theological virtue of hope.<sup>225</sup> As filial fear appears in the soul, a positive effect follows upon the intensification of love for God. St. Thomas characterizes it in this way:

*Under both considerations* filial fear has an eye only for a spiritual thing, for it fears nothing *except to be separated from God* and this fear is holy, remaining forever. However, just as initial fear is caused by imperfect charity, so this fear is caused *by perfect charity*. "Perfect charity casteth out fear" (I John, iv, 18). And thus initial

<sup>221</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 10, c.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, ad 2um.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 161, a. 2, ad Sum.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 19, a. 10, ad 2um.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 141, a. 1, ad Sum.

fear and chaste fear are not distinct from the love of charity, which is the *cause of both*, but only the fear of punishment. For just as the latter fear makes for slavery, so the love of charity makes for the liberty of children. For it makes man operate for God honor voluntarily, and *this is proper to children*

In filial fear there are no longer traces of the fear of punishment. The soul now loves itself only in God and for God alone. However, it must be noted that here it is a matter only of a relative perfection which is ever susceptible of increase. Moreover, St. Thomas foresees that filial fear can be intensified proportionately to the augmentation of charity:

It is necessary that filial fear increase when charity increases, just as the effect increases when the cause increases; for the more someone loves another, the more he fears to offend the latter and to be separated from him.<sup>227</sup>

In what do these ultimate purifications of our reverential fear of God consist? They consist in a definitive elimination of every presumption to make oneself God's equal, and in a more and more total submission to Him. St. Thomas explains this in the following passage, in which he again insists upon the two essential aspects of reverence: the fear of making oneself God's equal and the fear of being separated from Him:

Filial fear does not imply separation but rather *subjection to God*, since it flees from separation by subjection to Him. However, in a certain way it implies separation, that is, insofar as [the person having filial fear] *does not presume to make himself His equal*, but subjects himself to Him. This separation is found also in charity, insofar as he loves God more than himself and all other things. Thus when the love of charity is augmented, *it does not diminish, but rather increases the reverence of fear*.<sup>228</sup>

In effect, the proper role of the gift of fear lies in inspiring and developing reverence and submission to God. This role is fundamental in our spiritual life, for it is a fulfilment of the

*Ad Romanos*, c. 8, lect. 3.

*I-II Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 10, c.

*Ibid.*, ad Sum.

first demands of our love for God. Moreover, that is why St. Thomas is of the opinion that the gift of fear is the first to develop in the Christian soul. The Christian can perceive the manifest influence of this gift, before that of any of the other gifts, in his life.

In order that anything may be well moved by some mover, it is *first* required that the movable thing *be subject to the mover*, not repugnant; for the movement is impeded by the repugnance of the movable thing to the mover. This is the effect of filial or chaste fear, insofar as *through it we venerate God and flee from withdrawing ourselves from Him*. Thus filial fear holds as it were the *first place* in ascending among the gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>20</sup>

Although it is the first gift to manifest the growth of our charity, we must not conclude from this that its action is transitory in the progressive development of the soul's interior life. Nor should we conclude that, as the influence of the other gifts becomes more frequent, the gift of fear is gradually replaced by them until a point is reached at which the soul will have attained a sufficient degree of perfection, whereupon this gift will disappear completely. St. Thomas has a quite opposite opinion. The role of reverence is so fundamental in the spiritual life that it is inseparable from this life. In fact, the degree of our love for God can be estimated by the reverence which we have for Him. Too, one cannot conceive of the development of a spiritual life here on earth without the concomitant development of our reverence for God. St. Thomas loses no opportunity to insist upon this point. He is particularly explicit on this matter when he takes up the question of whether one can receive the sacrament of the Eucharist daily. Yes, he answers, if on every morning one feels more reverence for God; for the true sign that one is developing further intimacy with God and that one experiences more love for Him lies in the fact that instead of ceding to familiarity we have the greatest respect for Him.

In this sacrament two things are demanded on the part of the recipient: namely, the *desire for union*—the effect of love; and *reverence for the sacrament*—which pertain to the gift of fear. Now the first incites one to receive this sacrament daily, but the second holds one back. Thus, if anyone know from experience that the fervor of love is increased from daily reception, and that *his reverence is not lessened*, he should receive communion daily. However, if he notices that his reverence is lessened through daily reception, and that his fervor is not increased very much, he should stay away from receiving at times, in order that afterwards he may approach *with greater reverence* and devotion. \*\*

In this light our reverence develops to the extent to which our faith, hope, and charity increase—especially our hope, since reverence is the perfection of hope, and our charity, since reverence is the first thing demanded by charity. Because all the gifts and the infused virtues are connected with one another in charity, as our charity increases in each gift and virtue grows in perfection too, and contributes to the perfection of the others. Moreover, we can conclude that in the manner proper to each, the gifts and infused virtues all concur for the development of reverence for God. However, since this reverence is ordered to the perfection of the theological virtues, it especially receives its own perfection from what is more specially and more immediately ordained to it. This special factor is the next element for consideration.

It is not surprising to see that St. Thomas assigns to the virtue of religion the function of satisfying the demands of our reverence for God. In this way he makes religion the crowning perfection of this reverence. In fact, the more we realize the absolutely singular excellence of God, the more prompt and faithful we become in giving to God all the homages due to Him. There it is a case of mutual causality. Reverence cannot be perfected without the growth of religion: nor can the latter be intensified without the development of the former. One thing remains to be explained. Although St. Thomas has often repeated that the gift of fear is the beginning and end

\*\**IV Sent.*, d. XII, q. 3, a. 1, sol. 2.



of our religion—the *soul* which gives religion its life and true meaning—nevertheless, he states that it is the gift of piety which properly corresponds to the virtue of religion.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, in the first reading of his texts, it is difficult to see how the gift of piety is clearly distinct from either reverence or the *gift of fear*. The act proper to the gift of piety is, according to him, to have reverence for God by a filial sentiment:

*The principal act of the gift of piety is to have reverence for God by filial affection*<sup>132</sup>

Too, we know how St. Thomas has insisted upon the filial character of our reverence. For him filial fear and reverential fear are only one. From this arise two problems, one consequent upon the other. The first consists in discovering how piety is really distinct from reverence. The second lies in seeing, if they are distinct, how they influence each other and how they can complement each other.

First, in what are they distinct? The gift of fear and the gift of piety are principles of contrary movements. As we have noted before, for St. Thomas reverential fear is a movement of retreat. One would like to annihilate himself in the presence of God's majesty. The movement of piety is, on the contrary, something positive. One has only to confront the various passages in which this gift is treated to be convinced of this. In St. Thomas' thought, the gift of piety is properly an affection. In his commentary on the "Our Father" (a work considered by Father Mandonnet to be authentic), St. Thomas is most explicit on the matter. This is how he characterizes piety and distinguishes it from reverence:

The Holy Spirit makes us rightly love, desire, and seek, and first produces in us *fear*, through which we seek that God's name be sanctified. Another gift, the *gift of piety*, is properly piety, a *sweet and devout affection* for the Father, for every man constituted in misery. Since, therefore, God is our Father, as is evident, not only should we *revere and fear* Him, but too we should have a sweet and pious *affection* for Him.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>131</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 121, a. 1, ad 2um.

<sup>3,3</sup> *Ibid.*, ad Sum.

<sup>aa3</sup> *In Orat. Dorn.*, opusc. 34, 2a petitio.

We must remember that for St. Thomas, while all the infold virtues and gifts proceed from charity, certain gifts or virtues are in closer connection with charity than others. It is through them that charity imperates and informs the activity of the other virtues and gifts. It is in this sense that the gift of piety is distinct from the gift of fear; for the gift of piety proceeds from the gift of science, while the gift of fear has a very special connection with the gift of wisdom. Reverential fear is the first manifestation of the influence of the gift of wisdom in our souls:

Chaste or filial fear is the beginning of wisdom, as *the first effect of wisdom*. Since it pertains to wisdom to regulate human life according to divine reasons, in order to start, man must have reverence for God and submit himself to Him. It follows that in all things he will be regulated according to God.<sup>2\*4</sup>

Through the gift of wisdom our charity experiences, as it were, the sovereign excellence of God and thereby tends to feel reverence for Him ever more vividly. The gift of science, on the contrary, gives us a supernatural appreciation not so much of God's inaccessible grandeur as of His benefits and the innumerable gifts with which He has enriched us. The submission which we protest because of His beneficence is transformed into a more fervent and filial adherence to His wishes under the influence of the gift of science.<sup>235</sup> Here again one finds the same fundamental tendencies of the soul in its relations with God—the tendencies which appear as soon as the soul is conscious of the fact that God is its principle: reverence towards His excellence and submission to His beneficence.

The gift of piety is the perfect state of our sentiment of tenderness; the gift of fear is the perfect state of our sentiment of reverence. They are distinct in this. However, both are instruments in the hands of the same Spirit of love. Nor is it surprising to see them as mutually complementary. If we remember what has already been said about filial piety, we must conclude that the notion of piety includes in a certain way

*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 7, c.

*Ibid.*, I-II, q. 68, a. 7, ad 4um

the notion of reverence. In the relation of son to father, there must exist not only reverence and submission, but also love; for in fact reverence and submission are only the manifestation of a very deep love which is very conscious of its debts to the beloved. Too, it is expressed first by acts of justice. Love informs the attitudes of the soul which are imposed in (he relations of a son with his father, to whom he owes all. Therefore, love is a principle of our reverence and submission; it is also their end. Piety adds something over and above, the proper tonality which the relations of every son with his father should preserve: a confident spontaneity. Without piety, reverential fear is in danger of giving to submission a character of slavery, especially in our relations with God; reverential fear should be rather the fervent response to an immense love. In this light the gift of piety contributes to the perfection of reverence. This gift succeeds in transforming reverence into a filial attitude under the movement of an ever more intense charity and in the light afforded by the gift of science. Thus the gift of piety presupposes reverence in order to make it more in conformity with the love of God which urges us; the gift of piety makes our souls able to "revere God in a filial sentiment."

Reverence here on earth, like charity, can increase and be perfected. There is no possibility of a definitive development for reverence. However great its perfection may be, it remains unstable. To the fear of making oneself God's equal is added the very justifiable fear of being separated from God (and this because of the weakness of our nature). However, will the soul still experience reverence for God once it is beatified, that is, once it possesses its Good definitively?

St. Thomas' teaching on this matter is clearly established and in perfect conformity with his conception of reverence:

Filial fear is in the blessed, *with regard to the act of revering God*, but not to the act of fearing separation from God.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 07, a. 4, ad Sum.

Evidently the fear of being separated from God is no longer possible. That reverence is main and this ..... fear even in heaven seems at first sight to be repugnant. It seems to be incompatible with our usual manner of conceiving eternal beatitude. However, St. Thomas is of a contrary opinion. He even maintains that in heaven our reverence will be in its perfect state:

Just as filial fear is increased when charity is perfect, this fear *will be perfected*. Thus in the fatherland it will not have the same act as it has now.”

However, St. Thomas warns us that when our reverence is perfect it will not issue in the same act under all aspects. St. Augustine, whose conclusions on this question St. Thomas adopts, qualifies the reverence which we shall experience in heaven with the expression “secure fear.”<sup>21</sup> Whence comes this perfection, this security? Undoubtedly it comes from charity which definitively possesses God, thus excluding even possibility of being separated from God. The fear which was previously an integral part of our reverence resulted rather from its subjective conditions of existence. In heaven reverence will be perfect because we shall judge all things in the light of glory. Faith has dissipated many confusions about God; from the moment that we received faith, our reverence was rectified and intensified. However, there are still obscurities which even the illuminations of the gifts of wisdom, science, and understanding do not succeed in removing completely. In heaven, on the contrary, we shall no longer see God as “in a mirror” or “through a veil,” but face to face, just as He is. In this light, everything will take on its true proportions, God will appear to us in all His transcendence. We, on our part, shall realize how much we depend upon Him. We shall forever experience reverential fear for God because we shall always remain creatures:

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 11. c.

“St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 14, chap. 9.

Hope implies a certain defect, namely, the absence of beatitude; this absence is taken away through the presence of the same. But fear implies *the natural defect of the creature*, inasmuch as he is infinitely distant from God; and this *will remain even in the fatherlands*

*This* clear consciousness of our creaturehood will then be accompanied with the certainty that God will always be the fundamentally inaccessible One Whom it is impossible to equal. This further realization will keep us “collected in our own smallness,” with a great sensitivity about the things required in order to be divine:

Properly speaking, fear has evil for its object: not any evil, but *evil constituted as arduous*. Otherwise fear would not be in the irascible appetite. We do not, however, fear an evil which can be easily overcome or avoided; we only hate it. But the evil of separation from God is constituted *as most arduous*. Therefore, when the possibility of the evil is taken away, the operation of man to God *will remain as to something arduous*. In this light, fear will be taken away as to the act which consists in fearing separation, but it will remain as to the act which consists in admiring or *revering that arduous object*. This latter happens when man *leaps down into his own smallness* because he has considered such heights.<sup>240</sup>

In heaven our reverence will consist only in the “flight from adequation to God,” which we have recognized to be the most proper and most characteristic element of reverence.

Christ serves to illustrate this teaching of St. Thomas most exhaustively. This is how the Angelic Doctor resolves the problem of knowing whether Christ’s own soul possessed the gift of fear:

The fear of God was in Christ, certainly not as regards the *evil of separation* from God through fault, nor even as regards the *evil of punishment* because of a fault, but insofar as this fear has to do with divine eminence, that is, as Christ’s soul was moved to God by the Holy Spirit, with a certain *affection of reverence*.<sup>241</sup>

<sup>238</sup> *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 19, a. 11, ad Sum.

<sup>240</sup> *III Sent.*, d. XXXIV, q. 2, a. 3, quaes. 4, sol. 4.

<sup>241</sup> *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 7, a. 6, c.

Christ's soul enjoyed the beatific vision even on earth. In that way it was in the state of the blessed. Thus, just as in the case of the blessed, there could be no fear of any separation from God whatsoever. Yet, His human soul was seized continually with an intense reverence for God. In His case, reverence was in the pure, exemplary state. Never will anyone else feel as He felt the reverential shudder, the flutter of a creature before its Creator, the feeling of total deficiency in the presence of Him Who is Being by essence:

Christ, as Man, has this affection of reverence for God *more fully than anyone else.*<sup>2</sup>

#### CONCLUSIONS

With our researches ended, the exact value and the proper merit of Mr. Otto's conceptions, as well as their lacunae and insufficiencies, can now be appreciated more justly. Moreover, as a conclusion to this study, we would like to bring a general judgment or to synthesize a number of parallels between his doctrine and that of St. Thomas, that is, the parallels which we have established at each step in this work. This judgment on the whole will therefore suppose and will be referred to the partial points of view upon which we have already compared these two conceptions. However, it would be well, too, to discern the constants proper to each doctrine, which these diverse parallels point out as one compares one parallel with another. In this way we shall set off the fundamental points of view in which these two conceptions agree or differ.

The first encounter with Mr. Otto for anyone who is somewhat familiar with St. Thomas is sympathetic (we have pointed out this fact before). Mr. Otto's terminology is full of recollections. Moreover, his terminology invites many reconciliations with Catholic doctrine to which we are strongly tempted to accede—and this because we are so happy to find even in the first pages of Mr. Otto's book the very profound meaning

*of Gods mystery, to which St. Thomas has habituated us. On this point we can only agree with Mr. Otto. He is right in reacting against a certain self-sufficient conceptualism which makes us lose the consciousness of our incapacity to attain God as He is. It is true, also, that under this influence the religion of so many persons has been gradually rationalized, so much so that it has been transformed into a merely speculative adherence to a certain conception of God. Religion should consist in more and more intimate relations with a personal Being, Who is everything for us.*

However, Mr. Otto has fallen into contrary excesses. Through reaction against anthropomorphism he has turned to an agnostic symbolism; then, to avoid the dangers of an exaggerated rationalism, he has ended up in an exclusive sentimentalism which is very deceiving. Respect for the mystery about God does not imply, as he thinks, that we **must** renounce knowing and attaining God in any way other than by **sentiments** which we feel when we come into contact with **this** mystery. We have already shown how much subjectivism is included in such a conception of our relations with God. Mr. Otto's different positions are commanded by a false **theology on faith**.

Faith is not a more precise philosophy **about** God, or, as he says, a more skillful conceptualization of God. It is true that faith brings us new lights on God and in this way serves to satisfy much of the intellectual curiosity which existed before faith came along. But essentially faith is unsatisfied knowledge. Faith is always in the process of **going deeper** into its data and always awaiting a truly comprehensive vision of its object. Therefore, it is naturally humble and very conscious of its limits and imperfections. It has no pretension of understanding God or of exhausting the infinite richness of His nature. Mr. Otto's reproach has no bearing upon us. He does not speak to us when he states rightly "that a God Who is understood is not a God." He is mistaken because the true nature of faith has escaped him. Faith is more than adherence to dogmatic formulae; through these formulae it attains God

as He is, in His very individuality. Faith is more than an assent to truths of a strictly speculative order, for it is in the response of our whole being to the advances of a personal Being Who reveals Himself as our end and life. Moreover, it is in the light of faith that our relations with God originate, and it is in conformity with these relations that our lives are modeled and our attitudes towards Him are regulated. The act of believing has the selfsame reality for its object and its end: God in all the ineffability of His Being. Faith is a participation in the knowledge which God has concerning Himself and is thus a sharing in God's own life. It is evident, then, that no one can penetrate more deeply into the mystery of God, no one can be more conscious of His infinite transcendence than the believer by means of his faith. In this there is nothing which resembles, as Mr. Otto would have it, a form of theism in which the quality of the religion in a soul would be proportionate to the depth and penetration of its natural speculations about God. History' has sufficiently pointed out that no religion is born or developed in dependence upon a philosophy. The contrary' rather seems true.

Let us note finally' that, even in the natural order, St. Thomas shows the relation of reverence not to the intellectual progress in knowing God, but to the consciousness of *what God w for us*. It is a matter of very' practical truth and a sort of personal experience of our contingency' and our absolute dependence upon God. This conscious realization is possible for every soul—so much so that the movements of reverence and submission which arise from this realization are considered by St. Thomas to be natural and quite spontaneous on our part. "by a certain natural instinct." Thus in both the natural and supernatural orders, our relations with God, according to St. Thomas, depend upon what we know about Him. These relations depend, not upon our speculative knowledge of God, but, if we accept the expression as he himself understood it, upon our practical knowledge about Him, that is, upon the conformity of what we know about God with the demands for the



wellbeing of a right appetite. Air. Otto's great error comes from ignoring the part of the will, which is essentially inherent to every act of faith.

Another fundamental error of Mr. Otto's teaching (one which seems to be a logical consequence of the preceding error) consists in not having made our relations with God begin in love. For St. Thomas, reverence and submission are the first, spontaneous manifestations of a movement back to God, as soon as one realizes His unheard-of beneficence. Too, for St. Thomas, the initiative of our relations with God belongs to Him. He is the first to love us, by making a gift of being, then of grace. That is why St. Thomas quite naturally shows the relation of the fear which we experience in the presence of God's infinite excellence to the love which we feel for Him. If this fear is the first manifestation of this love and is accentuated as we love Him more, that is due, according to him, to the exceptional nature of our relations with God. One cannot conceive conditions more unequal than between the Creator and the creature. Nevertheless, for St. Thomas, our relations with God are relations of friendship. If the fear always remains and tends to be intensified along with love, this is because fear is one of the characteristics proper to our love for God. Since man always remains a creature, the more he loves God, the more he shudders at the thought of consenting to try to become His equal. However, because reverence proceeds from a love of friendship in regard to God, it is a fear opened out upon God. Although reverence consists in a movement of retreat, it is, in fact, only an annihilation of ourselves in the presence of God's infinite majesty. It is evident that St. Thomas is logical with himself in making reverence proceed both from a practical knowledge about God and from a love of friendship for Him. From the very act of faith, revealing to us God's transcendence and beneficence, our wills are engaged and bound with Him through love.

Mr. Otto has quite a different theory. God inspires us with fright, then little by little He fascinates us. First God makes

us afraid, then He attracts us. Here fear precedes love or rather evolves into love. Fear seems hardly to be, as with St. Thomas, the respectful expression of love. Moreover, can this fear about God, this terror which we feel as we approach Him, be identified with what St. Thomas calls reverence? A fear which excludes the love for God at this point proceeds rather from a very pronounced love of self. The fearful man thinks only of himself. St. Thomas would identify this fear rather with servile fear. He would undoubtedly consider it to be a passion of the strictly sensible order, depending upon an imaginative conception of God. Whatever Mr. Otto may say, no object has any control over our affections without first having been known and appreciated as being good or bad for us. In wishing to eliminate every rational factor in our relations with God, Mr. Otto would have to admit the dictates of our sensitive faculties of knowing, especially imagination. However, in this light one can no longer see how a religion can be elaborated from the data of the imagination concerning God, how it can be proposed as the achieved model. Thus, in wishing to find the meaning of the mystery about God beyond all knowledge, and wishing to take only affectivity as a guide, Mr. Otto unwittingly fails to go beyond the level of the senses. He is quite confident that our sensibility alone can attain what our reason cannot, that is, our sensibility can succeed in seizing God in the ineffable reality of His Being.

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